DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 389 502 RC 020 368

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TITLE "What the Red Squirrel Is To the Gray": The Importance of Culture in the Composition of School Boards on Mount Desert Island, Maine.
PUB DATE Oct 95
NOTE 93p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Rural Education Association (Salt Lake City, UT, October 1995).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; *Boards of Education; Community Leaders; Community Relations; *Cultural Differences; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Indigenous Populations; Local History; Local Issues; Role Theory; *Rural Areas; Rural Education; *Urban to Rural Migration; Values
IDENTIFIERS *Maine (Mount Desert Island); *Newcomers; Rural Culture

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the imbalance in representation of native-born Mainers on the school board in Mount Desert Island, Maine. Mount Desert Island is the location of Acadia, the second most visited national park in the United States. In this community, native-born Mainers represent 68 percent of the year-round population, but 80 percent of people serving on the school board are residents as a result of in-migration. The paper identifies cultural themes that have evolved from Maine's history, its position as the eastern "frontier," and exigencies of its climate and economy. An analysis based on acculturation theory and role theory found that cultural differences between native-born Mainers and in-migrants deter local people from competing for leadership roles in their communities. The poor representation of native-born people on local school boards negatively affects the education of their children, and, in effect, those who most need a voice do not have one. The reasons many Maine students do not seek postsecondary education are complex, involving deeply rooted cultural patterns and the perception that opportunities are limited in a rural economy. This paper identifies strengths of rural culture including a strong work ethic, individuality, a strong sense of family and community, and the importance placed on quality of life as opposed to status and materialism. Recommendations are offered for increasing leadership opportunities for native-born Mainers. Appendices include graphs illustrating percentages of native-born Mainers in the population and on the school board, percentage of town budget spent on education, and percentage of households with children. (LP)

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"What the Red Squirrel is to the Gray"

The Importance of Culture in the Composition of School Boards on Mount Desert Island, Maine

Barbara Kent Lawrence

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Maine School Board Association Handbook for Maine School Board Members, Table of Contents Page

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THE SCHOOL BOARDS OF MOUNT DESERT ISLAND, MAINE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis looks at a problem facing resort communities in rural areas that have attracted substantial in-migration. As the number of people "from away" increases, fewer native-born residents choose to serve on decision-making bodies such as local school boards. Mount Desert Island, Maine, location of Acadia, the second most visited national park in the United States, is such a community. Native-born Mainers represent 68% of the year-round population but 80% of people serving on the school boards are "from away."

In this paper, I identify cultural themes which have evolved from Maine's Yankee roots, its position as the eastern "frontier" and the exigencies of its climate and economy. Using acculturation theory and role theory, I analyze the imbalance in representation of native-born Mainers on school boards; a problem which developed with the in-migration of larger numbers of people from out-of-state. I look at cultural differences between native-born Mainers and in-migrants showing that certain traits deter local people from competing for leadership roles in their own communities.

I do not weigh the effects of the imbalance in representation, suggesting only that it may significantly impede the education of local people, qualifying them solely for low-paying jobs. Students who have had a difficult time in a school system that does not honor or understand their culture may drop out in mind, spirit and body. As adults, it is unlikely they will serve on local school boards which only intensifies the reinforcing cycle.

Finally, I make recommendations both to more fully involve stakeholders and to increase the percentage of native-born Mainers on school boards.

THE PROBLEM

Several months ago Dr. Howard Colter, the Superintendent of schools on Mount Desert Island, told me that the composition of the island school boards has changed over the years and no longer reflects the proportion of people who are native-born in relation to those who have moved to the state. According to the 1990 census the percentage of native born people is 65.9% in Bar Harbor, 64.9% in Mount Desert, 62.7% in Southwest Harbor and 70.7% in Tremont. However, Dr. Colter stated that 80% of current school board members were born out-of-state and in the Town of Mount Desert 100% of school board members are "from away." Tremont is the only town whose board has more people who were born in the state than those who have moved to Maine.

The Superintendent is troubled by this imbalance but does not know why it exists nor what consequences it will have for island students. I can not address the effects of poor representation on the school system within the scope of this study, however, I hope to analyze the problem to understand its origin. The imbalance is not limited to Mount Desert Island. A representative of the Maine School Board Association assured me that the problem is widespread, particularly in coastal communities, and added that she was concerned about its implications for native-born Maine students (Grant, 1995).

Another aspect of the problem, though one we will address only indirectly, is the increasing age of the population as retirees move to Mount Desert Island and young families move away because they find it hard to afford housing. I recently attended a "Meet the Candidates" evening held to introduce those who were running for membership on the Mount Desert school board. I was dismayed to find that I was one of the younger people in attendance, and that out of fifty-five people present, only four seemed young enough to have school-age children. The audience, containing three times as many women as men,

was clearly concerned with rising costs of education and seemed to hope the new members would keep expenses down. Their attitude towards education was particularly disappointing as townspeople in Mount Desert pay the lowest percentage of their budget to education of people in the four island towns. In some ways, this is not surprising, as the population of Mount Desert includes the smallest percentage of children in island towns (Appendix Tables 5 + 6).

THE STANDARD

I think the proper standard is parity. School boards should reflect the distribution of native-born residents and in-migrants from away that exist in the population. This means that the number of native-born members of a school board would roughly equal the percentage of native-born Mainers in the population of the town. However, I recognize that it would be extremely difficult to reach this standard and that any improvement in the ratio would be welcome.

THE SETTING :THE GEOGRAPHY

Mount Desert Island lies off the coast of Maine, connected by a causeway over which three to four million people travel each year. Most are visitors to Acadia National Park, or summer residents who own property on the island. Only about 12,000 people live on the island year-round. Most year-round residents were born in Maine, but an increasing number of people "from away" come to retire, work for an employer such as the Jackson Laboratory, Hinckley Yachts or College of the Atlantic; or are drawn by the extraordinary beauty of the island to live and create work.

The island is divided into four townships: Bar Harbor, Mount Desert, Southwest Harbor and Tremont, each including several small villages. In 1948, the ten village schools were consolidated into four elementary schools, one in

the principle village of each township. At that time each township also operated a high school, but , in 1967, after twenty years of often rancorous debate, residents voted to consolidate the four island high schools into the Mount Desert Regional High School located on the outskirts of Bar Harbor.

The elementary schools and high school as well as elementary schools on the outer islands constitute Union 98. Under Maine law, a school union is "composed of several school administrative units for the purpose of providing joint administrative services, including a joint superintendent" (MSBA, 1994:2). The Superintendent oversees Union 98 with the help of a Curriculum Coordinator, staff, and the school boards. Each town elects members to the school board who represent a proportional number of residents as determined by the Maine Department of Education. Some members also serve on the island-wide board Union Committee that oversees the high school.

THE SCHOOL BOARDS

Clearly, the process by which members are elected to School Boards on Mount Desert Island is political. However, interpreting the structure through a political frame alone misses other ways the functioning of school boards is driven by culture. Let us look briefly at the process for selection and election and requirements for service on a school board.

Maine law sets the requirements for service on a school board as well as the procedure for election. To be eligible to serve on a school board in Maine, a person must be a resident of the State of Maine; at least eighteen years of age, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the municipality s/he will represent. There are no requirements as to length of residency, birth within the State, level of education, or expertise. Any registered voters may vote for school

board members, regardless of the length of their residency, where they were born, or whether they have children in school (MSBA,Ibid, Appendix F).

In very small towns, until the 1970's , school board members may have been picked by a group of town "fathers" at the annual Town Meeting, which was a very informal event itself. Several informants mentioned this process noting that town's people would discuss the candidate's merits and worthiness for the job in coffee houses and other casual meeting spots, and that the process seemed to tap successful school board members many of whom were considered "pillars" of the community.

In 1967, when island communities agreed to consolidate the four town high schools , they formed Union 98 which includes all public schools on the Island as well as two outer islands. A School Union is "composed of several school administrative units for the purpose of providing administrative services, including a joint superintendent." The school board "may authorize one of its members to act for the school board in the meetings of the Union Committee" (MSBA, Ibid: 4). The Union Committee functions only to hire and fire the Superintendent (MSBA, Ibid: 2).

A board composed of all members of the island elementary schools oversees the high school. The State Department of Education sets the number of members allowed to each town based on population. Although members are allowed to send proxy votes, usually they can register a vote only by being present at meetings. In the past , towns with a small population have feared such arrangements because they are easily out-voted unless they form a coalition with another town or towns.

School board members must concern themselves with policy not day-to-day administration of the schools. However, I am sure boards sometimes stray over this line which may be both the product and cause of tension with the

Superintendent. School boards are empowered to 1) enact policy, 2) oversee the physical plant, including planning and financing of construction or renovation of school buildings 3) "preserve the minimum standards needed for the efficient operation and improvement of the school system" 4) require record keeping for school business, 5) approve the budget and financial reports, 6) estimate taxes and levies, 7) adopt courses of study, 8) provide staff and instructional materials and equipment, 9) evaluate the educational program to determine its effectiveness and 10) inform the public about school matters (MSBA, 1994: 5). This is a daunting assignment for boards comprised of people who are paid minimally for their time. Obviously, the members must rely heavily on the Superintendent and his or her staff because there is no way they can understand all issues.

Many of the responsibilities school boards assume involve dealing with scarce revenues. The duty to maintain the physical plant, including planning and financing of renovation or new construction, forces board members to deal with townspeople. In addition, they must work with administrators from the State Department of Education who , too often, link funding to consolidation of schools in misguided attempts to save money. In addition, the boards must approve school budgets, audits, major expenditures, and payment of debt as well as estimate and levy taxes to fund the budgets (MBSA, 1994:5+6).

Maine school finance law attempts to equalize money available to municipalities for education.

> The intent of the legislature is that at least 55% of total operating cost of Maine's public school system is paid by the state, with the balance coming from the local districts. This does not mean, however, that each unit receives 55%. Depending on its wealth, a unit may receive a minimum of 5% of the per pupil operating cost, or it may receive in excess of 90% from the state.
>
> MSBA, 1994:51

This policy creates serious problems for all the towns on Mount Desert Island.

The values of real estate on Mount Desert Island have risen in an extraordinary way over the past fifteen years. The Tax Assessor for the Town of Mount Desert reports that the evaluation of all town real estate in 1984 was $146,230,000. By 1994 this figure had risen to $516,900,000, an increase of 353.5 %. In some parts of the town of Mount Desert an acre of shorefront now sells for over a million dollars.

The tax base on Mount Desert Island is so high that schools are only eligible for the minimum state funding of 5% of expenditures for operations. The local property tax must provide the remainder (except for very small federal contribution) which is a heavy burden for local taxpayers, particularly year-round residents on fixed incomes. Many year round residents face the prospect of selling their houses because they can not pay the taxes. The high valuation which makes their community ineligible for significant state help for education increases the taxes making property unaffordable that has been in their family for generations. This pressures relationships between community members and school board members.

There is tension between the communities over the funding of the high school, which adds to stresses on school board members. In 1967, when the high schools in the four towns consolidated into the Mount Desert Regional High School, the state legislature passed a law allowing the island communities to use a formula based on population and property evaluation in determining a levy for each town. Mount Desert, the most affluent town on the island and the 22nd richest municipality in the State, was given an extra seat on the High School Board as compensation for assuming a larger share of expenses, a compromise the town now regrets.

Long-standing differences in the extent to which the towns support education further increases tension between High School Board members attempting to represent their distinctive constituencies. For example, at least since the late 1940's the town of Bar Harbor, the largest town on the island, has had a reputation for under-funding its schools. Bar Harbor was the first town to support consolidation of the high schools in 1948 and the only town to support middle school consolidation in 1993. In the debates over high school and middle school consolidation it is clear that people from other towns feared that Bar Harbor wanted to consolidate so it could take advantage of the greater financial commitment other towns make to education. In 1993-1994 Bar Harbor spent $3,589 per pupil which was $880.00 less than the next lowest per capita allocation. In 1993, residents of other towns were concerned that consolidation of middle schools would result in lowered educational standards because Bar Harbor, with more votes, would control expenditures.

Maine law asks school board members to be "responsive to their constituencies in governance, sensitive to the special needs of all learners in the district, an active advocate for learners, and a proponent of quality education. (MSBA, 1994:27). Board members are elected by a constituency within a constituency, in other words by voters whom they attract, in part, on the basis of a platform. I am concerned that native-born parents may be more likely to have children with special needs (identification of special needs children is , in itself, a political question). Anecdotal evidence suggests that more native born students are in the alternative education program at the high school, the business and vocational tracks and the teen-pregnancy program. As statistics the schools gather about students do not indicate where they were born, it is difficult to compile accurate data. If there are more native-born students in the

lower tracks and programs for students with "special needs" we are confronted by another problem.

Federal programs give additional support for special programs to serve the handicapped, special education students and students in vocational education. However, even though financial compensation may offset possible discrimination against students in these programs resulting from an imbalance in representation of natives on the school boards, expectations for student performance are not. People "from away" may have a cultural bias through which they see native Mainers. Studies have shown that teachers in other areas may expect less from students from lower SES backgrounds, which means these students are given less to do and fulfill their teachers prophecies about their potential. In the same way, people "from away" may expect less from native Mainers and, get less. I believe such "kindness" further disables rather than enables students.

Board members are affected by laws prohibiting conflict of interest. Maine law prohibits board members from having "a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the question or the contract considered "(MSBA, 1994:35). In a small community with few resources it is hard to avoid awarding contracts to people who have no direct or indirect pecuniary connection to the school board. I think this may be more of a deterrent to native-born people than to "people from away: who have not inherited or developed as many connections within the community.

THE STAKEHOLDERS

Unfortunately most stakeholders in this problem have not realized they have anything at stake.

KNOWN

Myself:

I am a stakeholder because I have an academic and intellectual interest in the problem as well as genuine concern for people on this island.

The Superintendent:

Fortunately, the Superintendent of Schools, who is a primary stakeholder, is aware of the problem and concerned about its implications.

The Maine School Boards Association:

I have spoken with two officials of MSBA, Paul E. Brunelle, the Executive Director and Martha M. Grant, a Policies & Resources Specialist. Both confirmed that MSBA is concerned about the rising number proportion of people "from away" on school boards.

LATENT STAKEHOLDERS

Native-Born Children:

Children are primary but usually voiceless stakeholders in school issues. Rarely do adults really listen to children, and even less often do they act upon the suggestion of students. It is very hard to develop reliable statistics showing that native-born children are more often placed in business, vocational, or alternative tracks, and classes for teen mothers; but anecdotal evidence suggests this is the local pattern. Statistics do show that Maine students go on to post-secondary education at a lower rate than the national average and that students on Mount Desert Island fall below the average for Maine students. I believe that the poor representation of native-born people on local school

boards affects the education of Maine's children negatively and that, in effect, those who most need a voice do not have one.

Parents of Native-Born Children:

For the same reasons, parents of Maine children have a stake in having representation on local school boards, but seem not to have realized the pattern that has developed over the past 20 years.

Teachers/Administrators:

School personnel have a stake in the problem, but again, seem unaware of it. I asked the man and woman who run the alternative education program at the high school if many of their students were native-born. At first they both answered, " oh no." Then each reflected briefly and together said " You know, you are right. They are all from Maine families." School personnel have a stake in the problem because unless the real needs and strengths of Maine born students are taken into account, programs designed for them will not be successful, and unsuccessful programs are expensive and frustrating for all involved.

Community Members/ Potential Employers:

There are many people in the community who are stakeholders not only as parents and taxpayers but simply as members of a community in which a large proportion of the students are poorly educated. For example, the rate of illegitimate births and crime has risen sharply in the past twenty-five years, as have the costs of welfare and other social programs has also increased. Clearly employers also have a stake in education, however, few native born business people seem drawn to serve on the school boards. One of the primary reasons Maine students do not go on to college is that they and their families think that having a college education will require that the student leave the state

to find a professional job. The irony is that most professional jobs in Maine go to people from out-of-state who then earn much higher salaries.

Other Professionals Who Serve Students:

There are many professionals including, doctors, ministers, drug and alcohol counselors, social workers, the police, leaders of neighborhood houses and youth programs, who may not realize they have a stake in this issue but would be very sympathetic and helpful once it is brought to their attention. The island has many community service organizations that are led by extraordinarily competent and dedicated staff who would be helpful in creating a change in the existing situation.

Taxpayers:

These stakeholders are least aware of the problem and its consequences, however, if they can understand the connection with unsuccessful programs that are costly to design and administer, they may see the need to revise the present system for electing school board members.

Potential Candidates:

There may be native-born people in the community who would like to become candidates for school board member but do not do so.

NEGATIVE STAKEHOLDERS:

Parents From Away:

Parents from out-of-state are likely to oppose changes in the ways school board members are elected. There are ways in which the needs of native-born people may differ from those of people who have moved "from away." Budget restrictions may force administrators to choose between the two.

Community Members From Away:

Other citizens who have moved to the state may also oppose changes that make is easier for native-born people to have equal representation. Mainers often criticize these people for bringing all the problems they wanted to avoid when they moved to Maine. The battles over school consolidation give ample demonstration of the tendency to impose urban and suburban "solutions" on rural people, even "solutions" that have been proven ineffective.

Retirees:

In addition to the reasons for opposing change cited above, retirees may fear school budgets will increase, affecting their taxes. Unfortunately, this short-sighted vision will focus on candidates who promise to keep expenses for education to a minimum.

School Personnel:

Some people within the schools will oppose change because they fear effects on their own programs, or simply because they fear change.

Current School Boards Members:

it is likely this group will oppose changes that make it easier for native-born people to have adequate representation either because they do not think this is a problem, or because they don't want to lose power.

Native-Born Mainers:

Some native-born Mainers may resist changes because they think people "from away" who are better educated and more sophisticated are more qualified to serve on school boards.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING: A WAY TO UNDERSTAND CULTURE CHANGE

A study of change requires that we set a stage, looking back into history to describe the culture before it was affected by contact. In the next section of this paper I will attempt such a description of themes that developed in Maine's Yankee culture before the Civil War. That war brought significant changes that opened the way for the increased number of summer visitors known as "rusticators" and "people from away" who brought their own distinctive culture.

THREE FRONTIERS

We can trace themes in Maine culture to its history and predominantly "Yankee" origins of its people 70.6% of whom were born within the state. Frederick Jackson Turner, in his analysis of American history, showed that the frontier was a critical forge of American character. He pointed out that Maine was the last frontier in the east, and created in its people a unique culture and way of life (Turner, 1967: 51-52).

After the end of the French and Indian Wars in 1763 and until after the Civil War, Maine, which was part of Massachusetts until 1825, had three frontiers: the northern woods , the outer islands and the ocean. Each venue challenged its people in ways that life in towns and cities did not and each helped form a distinctive culture in Maine. Let us look briefly at life in the mid-1800's in each of these three environments.

<u>The Woods:</u>

> It may be argued , persuasively I believe, that the Maine woods are the very touchstone of the Maine character itself. Since the first European settlement, Maine residents have lived in a powerful relationship with these woods, which have provided physical, emotional, and spiritual sustenance to individuals, families , and communities alike.
>
> Barringer, 1989:113

Timber resources attracted settlers of Maine and lumbering began immediately. " It was the quest for lumber that colonized Maine.... [and] the masting business (Pike, 1984: 49)."

Lumber, of course, provided the raw material for shipbuilding, which, in turn, encouraged more lumbering. Maine logging was so profitable a business that it attracted men from other states and from the Maritime provinces of Canada. All the lumberjacks lived a life of isolation, independence, self-reliance, and hard work, though this was often made enjoyable by the camaraderie and humor of camp life and the opportunity to be out of doors. Lumbering was always moving farther away as good trees were used up. As the supply of great pines dwindled in the Maine forests, some of the loggers followed the industry until there were Mainers in many of the western states. However, the woods were most important in creating Maine character.

> Many of the distinctive qualities of the Yankee temperament can be accounted for only by the proximity of the forest - of a feeling, unconscious but deep, of the presence of nature.
>
> Pike, 1984 :275

The Maine woods still offer a real challenge to those who work or visit and still stand as the closest approximation in the east to a wilderness frontier.

The Islands:

Islands are by definition insular. This insularity can be protective cover, preserving valued traditions, but it also holds inversions that might be better dissipated by the fresh air of outside influence. Coatsworth remarks, "island people almost always develop very definite characteristics, occasionally bad but usually good. They are old-fashioned; the sea protects them from the flood of

formlessness which washes across our towns and cities; they are franker, more individualistic... (Coatsworth, 1968:145)."

Island life could be very difficult. Virginia Coatsworth notes , "one of the outstanding features of pioneer life was and is its frequent isolation. I know of two cases myself where a family has been marooned without its men, and faced starvation waiting for their return. (Coatsworth, 1968; 118)." Isolation could have tragic consequences.

Islands are quintessential distillations of traits in Maine character.

> The youth who learns to wring safety and success out of such adverse conditions has been taught by these struggles with nature to be vigilant, self-reliant, patient and brave.
>
> Eliot, 1993:20

As Eliot notes, living on an island can benefit those who endure its demands.

Sailing: 1850 - 1880:

The influence of the sea on the people of Maine, particularly, of course, those who live near it, is inestimable. The rich fishing areas of the Georges Bank and the Gulf of Maine had originally drawn fishermen from Europe before colonization and continued to provide a living for many Maine families. Fishermen, like their western peers, the cowboys, shared the characteristics of courage, independence, and the ability to deal with physical hardship and a rigorous life out-of-doors. And, as on any frontier, some people thought they were beyond the law, because in some ways, they were.

Shipping was incredibly important to the economy of Maine. "By 1855 Maine was building a third of US shipping tonnage however, within four years this had fallen off 80%" (Barringer, 1989: 59). Maine shipbuilders adapted to

the needs of the times, constructing fishing vessels, Clippers, coasters, and Downeasters, as demand dictated.

Trade with foreign countries profoundly affected Mainers whether they actually traveled or simply heard stories and saw remarkable artifacts brought from abroad. Though few Clippers left from Maine, the China trade affected the economy of Maine as many of her men sailed out of Boston. Trade with the southern states and the Caribbean in sugar, molasses and rum, in exchange for Maine products such as fish, lumber, vegetables, livestock and ice was always more important to Maine than trade with the Orient.

Many Maine men went to sea, and in Maine whole families went to sea. I have been told, but can not confirm, that Maine was the only state in which families and, in particular, wives accompanied captains and other officers. Captains brought back stories and descriptions of other cultures and countries, as well as trinkets, fine porcelains, silks and other luxuries for their families as well as for trade. " As was common along the Maine coast, these overseas journeys introduced exotic cultures ... [and] stories of adventure and daring that kept ... children and grandchildren entranced "(Raup, 1993: 28 + 35).

Many wives of seafaring men carried the entire burden of running homes and sometimes businesses while their husbands were at sea giving the women independence and confidence unknown by those whose husbands were always home. In "The Country of the Pointed Firs," the old sea captain, Captain Littlepage reports:

> It was a dog's life, but it made men of those who followed it. A community narrows down and grows dreadful ignorant when it is shut up to its own affairs. In the old days a good part o' the best men here knew a hundred ports and something of the way folks lived in them. They saw the world for themselves and like's not their wives and children saw it with them...They were acquainted with foreign lands and their laws, and could see outside the battle

> for town clerk here in Dunnet. They got some sense of proportion. They lived more dignified. Shipping's a terrible loss to this part o' New England from a social point of view.
>
> Jewett, 1981 :20

This sense of proportion vanishes when the world contracts to the size of a village.

Working at sea, on an island , alone in the woods, or alone at home demanded that men and women be self-reliant, inventive, practical, courageous and hard-working. A sense of humor and the ability to entertain themselves certainly helped.

OTHER INFLUENCES

Wars: 1812 - 1865:

Sending her sons to war, had similar effects on Maine culture as did sending them to sea. Men ventured out of the known environment into unknown worlds, broadening their horizons and bringing back new experiences. Many did not return because they died, while others simply stayed away after serving. Maine sent more of her sons per capita to fight the Civil War than did any other state.

> By the end of the war, Maine contributed to the Union army thirty-one regiments of infantry, three regiments of cavalry, one regiment of heavy artillery, seven batteries of light artillery, and seven companies of sharpshooters. Altogether, 73,000 Maine men bore arms (about 12 percent of the state's population); 8,792 died, 11,309 were wounded or discharged because of illness.
>
> Shain, 1991 : 151

Many of these young men had hardly been out of their own village and county, let alone the state. War drew many Mainers outside the state, deeply influencing them and those they touched when they returned. Service in the Civil War gave tens of thousands of Maine men a far wider experience of the world,

and many never returned (Barringer, 1989: 9). Maine men and their families paid an enormous price for the experience. " The Civil War made everybody poor for a long time. Families were scarred for forty years afterward by the illness the fathers brought back, by mortgages, the high cost of bare subsistence, the memories" (Beam: 1957 :45).

The economy of Maine almost collapsed after the Civil War as the state lost markets and manpower. The void in the economy and population created an opening for people " from away" who exploited it by buying cheap land and employing local people at low wages. While it is unlikely many saw this as exploitation, from a distance we can see that Maine , particularly coastal Maine, became a service-based economy whose people increasingly felt beholden to and dependent upon people "from away" who commanded greater resources of money, social position and education. The unfortunate trend including loss of production capability and jobs continues. Maine lost 14.9% of manufacturing jobs between 1988 and 1994 for a total of .09 million jobs (Boston Globe, April 2, 1995 - Business 91).

Migration:

The migration of children to urban areas was another powerful influence on Mainers. Many left never to return, leaving a terrible emptiness in the life of their families and communities. Some of the most able of Maine's children left to find professional work in Boston and other cities and were greatly admired when they returned to visit or even to build their own "cottages."

During the early 1800s, Maine lost much of its population, as " new railroad market connections made the open and more tillable lands of the Midwest a more profitable place to farm than the hilly, rocky soil of Maine. (Lewis, 1993: 93). Some Maine people followed lumbering, and others stayed

in California, where they had gone during the heyday of the China trade and the gold rush. By 1860, about 50,000 people from Maine were living outside the state. Neither the economy nor the population of Maine recovered easily from these losses brought on in large part by the opening of the West by the new railroads.

This loss of jobs and opportunities affected the way people thought about the future.

> The economic resources of the locality were not only the woods and the land; the third way of making a living was by migration. At twenty-one the young flew away like birds.
>
> Beam, 1957 :207

Coatsworth adds, " The more enterprising among the [young people] spread their wings of ambition and flew away to the larger cities or to the westward" (Coatsworth, 1968: 214). Unfortunately, migration was established early as a pattern, a pattern that persists (Education Week, May 3, 1995 : 22).

Rustification:

Coincidentally, in the late 1880's, through work of the "Hudson" school artists Thomas Cole and Frederick Church, summer visitors began to discover the natural beauties of Maine. The "Rusticators" stepped into a void in the economy and population, at first just as guests in boarding homes and inns, and later as "cottagers." Many visitors answered the invitation of the Maine Central Railroad publications of 1895 to " become once more, eager children of nature" in a paradise built by Mother Nature and the hard work of its "idealized natives....rural, salt-of-the-earth people, these tight-lipped taciturn, yet humble folk, living in harmony with their inner natures and the rugged outer beauty of their land" (Lewis, 1993:91+93). In the late 1880s, railroad publicists invented

the state slogan that now appears on license plates : *Maine, Vacationland.* The Maine myth was born.

At first, these people stayed in hotels newly built to accommodate them. Catering to summer guests provided a great deal of new work, from construction to maid-service. However, visitors soon wanted their own "cottage" , and started buying Maine property, taking this essential asset from Maine natives. Mainers mistakenly thought they were getting the better of the deal as they sold their birthright for what seemed extraordinary profit. Again, the influx of summer people provided a great deal of work:

> ...many people were required to aid in the construction of the elaborate summer " cottages," and to serve as gardeners and caretakers. Local people also were employed to drive the carriages and buckboards and either supply or care for the horses whose owners had brought them to the Island for the summer months, although usually grooms accompanied them and were in charge. Since boating was such a popular activity....men were employed to manage them...Women were employed as maids, cooks, dressmakers, and hairdressers. The market for fish, butter, milk, chickens, vegetables and other produce brought money to Island farms. Stores were increased in size or built new.
>
> Somes-Sanderson, 1982 :229

Even natives who feared the consequences of 'rustification' were forced to admit that rusticators were a "boom to the economy at a time when money was scarce and native industry declining (Somes-Sanderson, 1982 :229)."

In the 1890s, Edwin Lawrence Godkin, a journalist, editor and author , founder of the Nation and editor-in-chief of the New York Post, decried the invasion, pointing out its most insidious aspect :

> the cottager , who has become to the boarder what the red squirrel is to the gray, a ruthless invader and exterminator....gradually, and it may be at first imperceptibly, separates himself in feeling and in standards from his fellow-boarders. The year after he is in the cottage and the mischief is done. The change has come. Caste

> has been established, with all its attendant evils. The community, once so simple and homogeneous, is now divided into two classes, one of which looks down on the other.
>
> Shain, 2 1991 : 352

Others agreed with his observation.

> There is no doubt but that the differing backgrounds, interests and behaviors would have been difficult at best, but on Mount Desert the sensitive and reserved village folk, not given to communicating with strangers, and certainly not with their employers, were in marked contrast to the cliquish, exclusive sojourners, conscious of their social standing and aware only of their employees as servants.
>
> Of course, said an elderly lady in a 1920 interview, ' they hired us to be their servants and I suppose we were, for we did the work of servants and were paid for it. We didn't have to take the jobs but we needed the money. Still, they needn't have made our lower social level so obvious. For example, they didn't talk with us in the same way they did with their friends. We were never invited as 'guests' to anything. Of course, we didn't invite them to our doings either. We were just different.
>
> Somes-Sanderson, 1982 : 235

It seems that the Maine tradition of valuing people for the way in which they did their work had come into conflict with the wider culture which valued people for the prestige of their status ascribed at birth or achieved in their work.

Robert Pyle, librarian in Northeast Harbor, identifies the beginning of a cleavage between summer and year-round people as 1906 when the Northeast Harbor Swim Club was established by and for summer people exclusively. Until then, villagers had owned the major assets of land and property and worked with "rusticators" on Village 'improvements' such as The Neighborhood House, the Library and other resources. The Swim Club was designed to separate the two constituencies and achieved its purpose (Pyle, Interview, 1994).

Jewett's attempt to pass off the importance of the changing relationship inadvertently underscores it:

> It has been suggested that the wealthy summer people were unintentionally and unwittingly guilty of a form of insidious corruption, changing a class of self-independent, hardworking individuals into a group of parasites and lackeys. To a degree, this may have been true. But surely no one can be blamed for offering opportunity , or for exchanging a difficult, dangerous and sometimes impoverished life for one that was easier, more secure and more profitable. All that one had to do to share in the bonanza was to learn to say :yes, sir.' This was not always easy for men and women whose chief pride had always been that they were their own bosses. To some, the difficult lesson was not worth learning, but to more, the compensations made it worthwhile.
>
> Jewett, 1981 : 167

Another writer, William Henry Bishop, pointed out that on Mount Desert Island "which fashion has so liberally taken into favor" young waitresses "devour... with undisguised admiration the toilets of the city belles; and the men [work] as porters, drivers, and hostlers, [s]till a bolder portion of the men refused to yield to the blandishments of these spiritless new occupations, and cured their fish and went their voyages as usual " (Shain, 1992:242).

Working for summer people instead of with them has eroded local people's confidence in their own worth and efficacy. I find examples of this in the literature as well as in my own experience. I remember two incidents in particular. I was in the local drugstore several years ago in the early summer and the pharmacist, who all winter had called me Barbara suddenly addressed me as "Mrs. Train." I was startled but responded with a big grin, "Yes, Mr. Hagberg?" Don smiled and replied that he had forgotten I was now a year-round summer person and not just a summer person. We could still be friends though it was late June. Another time I was waiting in line at the stationery store when a summer person came in, saw a friend being waited on and got into immediate conversation, ignoring the fact that her friend 's delay in responding to the owner of the store kept others waiting. "Babbie," she said," Is there

anyone here yet? It doesn't seem as if anyone is here! " The owner of the store and I exchanged knowing looks, and later said to each other that we thought we were people and we were , in fact, there and had been all winter.

At a recent meeting to present candidates for elective office in Mount Desert, a man who is a fifth generation Mainer born in Seal Harbor, stated his perception of this relationship with startling clarity. "Everyone gets to lead the good life here. It is important to understand the relationship with the summer colony. They pay 75% of the taxes, we maintain the town" (Smith, 1995:meeting). No one argued with this characterization of the relationship, or debated its implications.

This uneasy and sycophantic alliance continues. It is still built on a myth that ignores the realities of a harsh climate, limited options, and the needs of families finding it harder to preserve both a way of live and a place in which they can afford to live their lives. The implications of moving from an economy based on production and transport of goods to one based on service to others include dependence and second-class citizenship. The habit of mind that this fosters now frustrate Maine's ability to offer other opportunities to her people.

THEMES IN YANKEE CHARACTER

In a modern industrialized society with a highly developed communication system, rural people are influenced by the restlessness of the dominant culture which creates needs for material possessions that are difficult for rural people to fill. One of the challenges facing rural educators is dealing with the confrontation between the dominant national society and local traditional culture. It is a complex challenge pervading all aspects of schooling and education and one we can see in the erosion of local control of important decision-making bodies like school boards.

Yankee society, like all others, was bound by internal and external controls, " the very effective controls of custom and public opinion (Beam, 1957 : 167.)" Maine people valued certain behaviors and disdained others, and though in Beam's word Yankee character was "definite" , still behavior shaded into blends of black and white. In 1987 the Commission on Maine's Future sponsored a study entitled The People of Maine: A Study of Values. The study identified 18% of Mainers as Yankees and another 11% as members of the very similar group traditionalists. The Yankees are characterized as having " traditional rural Maine values -- self-reliance, skepticism, 'show me' pragmatism (Market Decisions, 1989:20), traits we saw in the forefathers. These include:

CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOL BOARDS

BARRIERS:
1) fatalism ,

2) belief in constancy: "if it was good enough for my grandfather it is good enough for my grandson ,

3) fear of educating the next generation only to have students move away to find good jobs ,

4) reluctance to assume debt, penny-pinching, stinginess

5) fear of the larger society, feeling of powerlessness and stigmatization as unsophisticated, feeling that it is a liability to come from a "hick" town

6) lack of critical sense, susceptibility to rumor and petty gossip ,

7) feeling that someone in the community gets ahead only by taking from neighbors , not by creativity and hard work,

8) reluctance to achieve because success will subject one to criticism and distrust,

9) small-mindedness, insularity (exacerbated by homogeneity and stability of population) ,

10) reluctance to think abstractly or work on goals that do not have immediate practical value.

11) love of place (roots sunk so deeply deter exploration)

12) reluctance to organize except for one-time events or in a crisis (Lawrence, 1994:23)

Traits that could be nurtured to strengthen involvement in School Boards:

1) strong sense of family and community

2) strong work ethic,

3) strong sense of morality and integrity, "the Puritan ethic.",

4) relatively little alienation of the younger generation,

5) pride and independence, integrity;

6) importance of the "quality of life";

7)relative lack of interest in high status, prestige, material success;

8) sense of humor and irony

9) ability to find practical solutions, inventiveness.

10)individuality including a tolerance of eccentricity and "difference"

11) Love of place - sense of stewardship Ibid, 22

Louise Rich sums up these traits by telling us that Maine is not merely a place.

> It is the spiritual home and shelter as perfectly fitting and comfortable and natural as its shell is to a snail, which, like snails , they carry with them wherever they may go.....Mainiacs away from Maine are truly displaced persons....The people, too, are Maine; the close-mouthed, level-eyed men and women with their horse

> sense, their bitter humor, their Puritan consciences, and their good old Yankee names ...They are a strange and contradictory breed, misfits perhaps in the modern world , but completely at home in the simpler world of their own choosing or making
>
> Rich, 1964: x-xii

Rich romanticizes Maine, nevertheless it is a prescient passage. We can see now how influences 'from away' have made some Mainers feel like misfits in their own state. I will elaborate on some of the traits enumerated above.

Work Ethic:

Yankee society seemed grounded on bedrock of the work ethic. "Work was not for money or for possession it was for love, work for work's sake. The Yankee of this time and place was so serious a workman that as a spectator, he tended to identify himself not with the hero, but with substance and techniques (Beam, 1985:70)." People were judged by their ability to work hard, and work itself became ennobling if done well, even a back-breaking task like picking potatoes.

> She moved down her first set of rows like fire through dry brush. The sight of her line of barrels set off within her a small warmth of consolation that helped her maintain the frenzied momentum into the next row. She took a grudging pride in her work. Doing it well, doing it best, was what made it bearable. ' Quite a worker, that April, quite a worker.' people had always said, and always said twice as if unable to underscore the fact in any other way, even when she was a kid. 'Quite a worker.'
>
> Honig, 1989: 219

"Economy was tied to work and the lazy were just one step from the poorhouse (Beam, 1985:164)." People found virtue in order, organization , "an essential of work," cleanliness and "an almost excessive regard for time "Beam, 1985 :167).

All these traits could be seen as essential for work if other equally productive cultures had not chosen different paths over which to reach their goals.

That work done well was the goal, not necessarily the nature of the work nor prestige, power or money, may have helped people adapt in time of hardship or change, adopting new work when the old failed. It may also be one reason people "from away" and Mainers have had a hard time appreciating each other. Those "from away" tend to honor power and prestige and Mainers have felt insulted when their work is looked down upon and the way in which they do their work goes unappreciated.

Thrift and Miserliness:

Many writers contrast the themes in Maine character of thrift bordering on miserliness, pettiness, and penny-pinching cheapness with the generosity and kindliness of neighbors and strangers. Lura Beam states, "It is impossible to realize the ardor with which the forefathers once tried to be 'saving... ' Debt paved the road to ruin, so the game was to calculate what could be saved by doing without...small deprivations were accepted thankfully (Beam, 1957:161). "Borrowing money was disapproved of and buying on time - except for houses or land - was unknown "(Beam, 1957 :62).

Individualism and Eccentricity:

Independence and individuality were deeply rooted traditions in New England culture, which also promoted tolerance of eccentricity and deviance to an unexpected degree. "The feeling for the individual in one's self was so strong that it protected all kind of eccentricities in others. Except in an English village no people could have been more tolerant of variations from the norm... life's oddities" (Beam, 1957:165). "But here, strangeness is more accepted than

among people who constantly read other men's ideas and are more closely gripped in the world of machinery...here the isolated families, fighting their separate fights against Fate and the encroaching wilderness, are aware of curious recurrences and accept them" (Coatsworth, 1968: 44). The literature abounds with tales of eccentrics as well as people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds who, in the 1800s were accepted at least onto the fringe of society.

Endurance / Repression and "Volcanic Eruptions":

Self-discipline, the discipline to deny and suppress, which Puritans admired and inculcated is one aspect of stinginess. "Life was supposed to be full of repressions and inhibitions. It was 'good for them' to repress children. People were proud of breaking the spirit of the young. Girls responded more sensitively to repression with the result that an inhibited woman ground down to fatal meekness might be admired as refined "(Beam, 1957: 91). Beam notices "faces are marked with discipline... " (Beam, 1957:53) "Suffering for the sake of doing right was a commonplace and the gospel of endurance was so extreme that nowadays it might seem masochism (Beam:1957:171).".

In a brilliant image Beam shows us that in adulthood , this pattern could result in "a contrary right-hand instinct, subtle and maddening, which warned him not to let joy go too far, not to let the way become too easy , in fact to accept the hard. In some private wind tunnel of his own, his test was to see how much pressure he could resist" (Beam ,1957:161) and the answer was , a lot.

The countervailing force and "chief protection against this strictness was the affirmative attitude toward love and marriage... Love began with all man's dreams and turned into his stability "(Beam, 1985:171).

And the forces repressed sometimes emerged:

> I tell you, Leslie, that for intense self-centered, smouldering volcanoes of humanity, New England cannot be matched the world over. Jewett, 1986:76

Love of Land and Animals:

It is hard for people who do not live in the country to understand the depth of love country people have for the land and the solace they derive from communion with the other creatures who share it. Lura Beam tells us that Maine farmers named the remarkable stones and trees on their land, giving these a value and dignity. In this way, " small living things were accepted as the furnishings of the landscape, and talked about as part of farm possessions" (Beam, 1957:28).

"The land was a passion, magical in its influence upon human life. It produced; nothing else at all, except trees and flowers and vegetable harvests. Life ran back and forth, land into people and people back until land, until both were the same" (Beam, 1957:3). Lura Beam found this so compelling that the last line in her book is "Living he was the land" (Beam, 1957:233). These sentiments underscore a feeling of stewardship, not to be confused with private property rights which until recently have superseded public concern. Love of place binds Mainers to their towns and state, making it very hard for some to leave, even briefly.

Growing Up Means Going Away:

In a paper by that title Gordon Donaldson describes a fear that many Maine writers voice and which echoes through the culture. Migration was such a powerful means of survival for many Maine sons and daughters, themselves the children of migrants, that its pain still scars the culture. Fear of losing their

children actually makes parents hold them back from opportunities for better or higher education.

Neighborliness, Gossip and Spite:

The homogeneity of the population promoted both mutual support, understanding and neighborliness as well as divisive jealousy, gossip, and pettiness. Beam reminds us that :

> Most of the people of the hamlet lived together so closely the collective feeling was like that of the tribal clan or the British regiment. The average American never gets a chance now to know a population unit so deeply homogeneous. Schisms and feuds made convolutions within the large unity, but everyone knew everyone else : what he did, how he met good and ill.
>
> Beam 1957 :51

The other side of this is the extraordinary degree to which Mainers can cut themselves off 'to spite themselves.' Rich states, "Maine logic leans heavily on precedent and sees nothing odd in cutting off the nose to spite the face. That operation is one of a man's inalienable rights" (Rich, 1964: 182). Coatsworth offers an example in the family of a widowed fisherman's wife, her new husband and her father , who came to live with them after the death of his own wife but refused to acknowledge or talk to his son-in-law for the thirty years in which he shared their house(Coatsworth, 1968: 130). What extraordinary repression and self-discipline this must have taken ! Jewett gives us another example. " On a larger island, farther out to sea, my entertaining companion showed me with glee the small houses of two farmers who shared the island between them, and declared that for three generations the people had not spoken to each other even in times of sickness or death or birth " (Jewett, 1981:35).

The small scale of village life lends itself to becoming preoccupied with trivia and gossip. Though Sarah Orme Jewett reminds us that human interaction on the smallest level is the grist for great writers and that in a small neighborhood "one bit of news will last ... a fortnight " (Jewett, 1986: 77). Such gossip and negativity can erode trust and self-confidence and retard individual and community growth.

Since the l890's rustification has continued apace. In 1952 private citizens including John D. Rockefeller donated land to create Acadia National park which now attracts between 3 and 4 million visitors each year. The impact on a year-round community of 12,000 is extraordinary. Many of these summer visitors become entranced by the beauty of the island and return to live. Many are retirees, though increasingly, families are moving to Mount Desert. As these people have made their money elsewhere they can afford extraordinary prices for property (an acre of shorefront on Somes Sound now sells for over a million dollars) so that now little shorefront land remains in native hands. The economies of towns on Mount Desert Island are founded on service to tourists, summer people and the people, like myself, who are called "year-round summer people."

CONTRAST WITH MIDDLE CLASS CULTURE

In Culture Against Man, Jules Henry identified traits characterizing middle class culture .

> Ours is a driven culture. It is driven on by its achievement, competitive, profit , and mobility drives, and by the drives for security and a higher standard of living. Above all it is driven by expansiveness. Drives like hunger, thirst, sex, and rest arise directly out of the chemistry of the body, whereas expansiveness, competitiveness, achievement, and so on are generated by the

> culture; still we yield to the latter as we do to hunger and sex.
> Henry, 1963:13

Because our economy is driven by a need to expand, somewhat like a pyramid scheme, we constantly create consumer needs it can and must fill, if it is to continue. But who really needs a Teen-Age Mutant Ninja Turtle or Mighty Morphin Power Ranger?

In contrast, in an isolated traditional society where few needs are created consumption and production can balance as long as the society meets basic needs. Each member of the society plays a part, often determined by and at birth. Roles are more often ascribed than achieved and though this causes inequities one should not underplay, there can be a sense of order and fulfilled expectation impossible in a modern capitalistic society. " The contrast between primitive culture's assumption of a fixed bundle of wants and our culture's assumptions of infinite wants is one of the most striking and fateful differences between the two cultural types! It contributes to stability in the one and restlessness in the other " (Ibid, 9).

This restlessness is apparent in middle-class American culture. As Edward T. Hall explains, the dominant culture in the United States is comprised of many elements , a blend though spiced with regional flavors.

> Despite its ethnic diversity, the U.S. has managed to absorb bits and pieces of many cultures and weave them into a unique culture that is strikingly consistent and distinct...Among their most observable traits are openness, friendliness, informality, optimism, creativity, loudness, and vitality .
> Hall, 1990: 140

> The kind of people who succeed in business in the United States are goal-oriented, concerned with individual achievement, and interested in the development of their own career. They tend to be

> pragmatic, assertive, and relatively egalitarian; at the same time they need constant feedback, evaluations, praise, and rewards.... Americans are very status-conscious and place great emphasis on status symbols such as money, celebrity, power, image, possessions and institutional affiliations.
>
> Ibid, 170 + 175

These traits, whose merits we so rarely question, contrast sharply with the values and beliefs held by traditional rural Maine families.

In a modern industrialized society with a highly developed communication system, rural people are influenced by the restlessness of the dominant culture. The dominant culture create needs for material possessions that are difficult for rural people to fill. I suggest that one of the challenges facing rural educators is dealing with the confrontation between the dominant national society and local traditional culture. It is a complex challenge pervading all aspects of schooling and education.

The culture of native-born people works against their participation in supervisory bodies dominated by people from away who are more aggressive, more interested in status and who are more sophisticated. As fewer native-born people serve on school boards, the interests of native-born students are less well represented. As they feel the schools are less attuned to their needs and undervalue their culture, these students are increasingly alienated and less likely to serve on school boards when they are adults.

CULTURE and ACCULTURATION THEORY

THE THEORY

Culture, defined as everything passed on by learning, is an essential component of what it means to be human. The study of acculturation is based on understanding changes that occur in a culture over time due to contact with another culture. Although human behavior is, in part, determined by genetic inheritance, we are to an extraordinary degree, molded by our interactions with our environment which includes, of course, other human beings. As we are molded, so do we mold, as we are taught so do we teach. This action and inter-action creates and guides change. Human culture is plastic, "subject to perceptible changes from one generation to another " (Paul, 1990: 463) and the rate of change may be accelerated by contact with people from different cultures.

Teaching and learning of culture can be overt, as is the case for subjects taught in a school. However, most learning is "covert" in the sense that it is unintentional. "Adults easily overlook the fact that considerable inculcation occurs by innuendo, involuntary example, and unintended imitation. The sounds and rules of language can be explicitly taught, but in all cultures the appropriate patterns of speech - pitch, rhythm, accent connotations, word order, and other features - are communicated mainly by unconscious instructions and unconscious learning" (Herskovits,1958 2) "What is true of language holds for most other aspects of culture - their existence and transmission are largely taken for granted by the people concerned (ibid 466)."

Acculturation is an important element of culture theory. First used by Powell in the early 1900's, the term gained enough acceptance to be included in the 1928 edition of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, defined as " the approximation of one social group of people to another in culture or arts by

contact; the transfer of cultural elements from one social group to another " (ibid. :2) and in a later edition as "the imparting of culture by one people to another" (Idem). The term overlaps "culture contact" preferred by European anthropologists, and incorporates at least three possible meanings.

The first meaning implies "close contact between peoples resulting in a give-and-take of their cultures." The second implies " the process ... whereby a specific trait is ingested by a recipient culture, while still others apparently accept it as the means whereby an individual ' becomes acculturated' to the patterns of his own society." In this paper I will use the term to describe " the processes by which aspects of elements of two cultures mingle and merge " (ibid.: 6).

Acculturation refers to the process by which something is taken into a culture, adjusted and fitted to that culture, a situation " which suggests that the cultures in contact are in relatively equal position. The term assimilation describes contact between two cultures that are not equal in power, and in which one culture engulfs the other to a large extent.

> In acculturation the cultural groups involved are in an essentially reciprocal relationship. Both give and take. As a result it is a valid problem to consider what is adopted and what not, and the whys and wherefores. In assimilation the tendency is for the ruling cultural group to enforce the adoption of certain externals, in terms of which superficial adjustment seems to be attained. The adopting culture in not in a position to choose. ibid.: 7

The relationship of native-born Mainers to the dominant middle and upper class society of transplants "from away" fits neither acculturation nor assimilation exactly, but seems closer to a particular form of acculturation: non-directed culture change in which choice is a critical determinant. Maine people can adopt traits of the dominant culture if they choose to do so, however, they

are not forced to. In truth, what seems to be happening is that many from the younger generation are choosing lifestyles that differ markedly from their parents. For example, the rate of illegitimate births was 3% in 1960 in Hancock County and by 1993 had risen to 25%, a change found in other parts of the country.

Choice is a critical determinant in culture change. Anthropologists have distinguished between directed and non-directed culture change. In directed culture change the dominant group is able to impose its ideas and ways of being and thinking, on the subordinate group. In non-directed culture change the less powerful group, for a variety of reasons, can choose whether or not to assume patterns of the dominant culture selecting only certain elements to graft onto the existing system. Many researchers, including John Ogbu, Clifford Geertz, Edward H. Spicer and George and Louise Spindler, have shown that in such cases, the new elements seem to "fit" better into the subordinate culture and may invigorate it.

Cultural elements may be physical, such as stone ax handles re-hafted by the Australian aborigines as adzes, or the cargo cult created by native Papuans from the wreckage of downed planes. Elements may be ideological, religious, or part of the social structure of the society. Again, examples of such acculturation abound in the literature. The Inuit of Alaska and Canada gave up a diet rich in vitamin D for more "prestigious" canned foods. Because these foods were very expensive the Inuit could only buy the cheapest varieties and the resulting deterioration of their diet led to severe malnutrition. Native Americans incorporated the American flag into their Ghost Dance hoping it would give them power as it empowered American soldiers. In a similar way, black Africans hammered nails and other pieces of metal into carvings depicting their gods because they thought the nails were the empowering force in crucifixes.

The Seminole Indians of Florida and Oklahoma offer an example of both non-directed and directed culture change. Members of the tribe forced to resettle in Oklahoma fared significantly less well that those who escaped American troops by hiding in the swamps, often submerging themselves and breathing through straws. After many years of fighting, the US government abandoned the struggle in the mid 1800's as it was costing about $10,000 to capture and remove each Indian. The Seminole in Florida were left to develop their own culture and society and were not rediscovered by whites until the late 1800's. By that time hostility to native Americans in the east had diminished and the Seminole were allowed to acculturate at their own pace. They have been significantly more successful at adapting to the dominant white culture than tribes-people in Oklahoma. John Ogbu has made a similar distinction between people who were forced to migrate, such as enslaved Black Africans and those who chose to emigrate such as Jews and the Irish who sought a better life in the United States.

When people in the dominated culture begin to absorb messages that erode their self-esteem and self-confidence they can lose faith in their institutions as well. In severe cases, members lose faith in their traditions, rituals, ceremonies and the resulting depression usually severely damages their relationships with each other. In extreme examples, such as seen among the Australian aborigines and many native American people, the culture and its members may literally sit down to die. The acculturation of native born Mainers to dominant middle class culture may be more subtle and less dramatic but no less important.

APPLYING THE THEORY OF ACCULTURATION

Those who are concerned with rural students and have studied school consolidation point out that the agenda for rural schools is at odds with the culture of many of the students these schools serve (DeYoung, Howley). These researchers think the closing of small rural schools reflects the culture of urban-trained educators who try to impose an urban model on rural communities. I think there are many ways in which rural people are losing their culture and power over their own lives; erosion of representation on school boards is just one.

The educational goals of rural families, deeply rooted in people and places, often differ from those of middle-class families. Where they work and live may not be as important to people in a highly mobile society as it is to members of extended families tied to land that has sustained them for generations. For traditional rural families there may be little evidence that investing in education after high school pays off, particularly when those who might provide professional role models have moved away. For many rural students, the choice between a career and staying in their communities seems to offer no choice at all

Tom Goodwin, a fifth generation Yankee from Tremont, Maine explains. "Our children are our greatest export. We feed them, we clothe them, we educate them and we send them away to find work. We pay three times in raising them: for their expenses, with taxes to educate them and then in losing them." This reality tears at the life of rural families and communities and creates a barrier to post-secondary education, for how can a family enthusiastically support higher education when the cost includes losing its children ?

In his study of "Sawyer", a Maine milltown, Gordon Donaldson documents this problem in a paper aptly titled "Growing Up Means Going Away" which

shows that many rural Maine people think a college graduate will have to leave the community to find employment. We can see the effects of a conflict between post-secondary education and the need to leave home to find suitable work in the disparity between the rate at which students from Maine graduate from high school and the rate at which these students go on to post-secondary education. In Maine, the graduation rates are quite high, but relatively few students go on to college or post-secondary education. In 1993 the graduation rate from Maine high schools was 82.4%. (Maine Dept. of Education, 1994:1). Maine students graduate from high schools at a rate higher than the national average, (78.8% vs 75.2% in 1991) but fewer Maine students go on to post-secondary education than students from other states whom they outscored only a few years earlier (Maine Dept. of Education, 1992: 1 + 5). In 1993, 58.24% of Maine's high school graduates continued their education in comparison with a national average of 66%. However, Maine counts " only 19 percent of its residents as college graduates compared to a New England average of 27 percent (Maine Times, Jan. 6, 1995:12). Ironically, on the 1992 NAEP, Maine's fourth graders ranked first in math and second in reading. Maine's eighth graders ranked fourth overall.

In Tremont, the poorest town on Mount Desert Island and the one with the highest percentage of native-born residents, the figures tell a poignant story. Children in the elementary school usually perform as well on the Maine Educational Assessment as children from Mount Desert, the most affluent town on Mount Desert Island. The citizens of Tremont are concerned about their children's education and proud of the local elementary school. Tremont spends 71% of its town budget on education whereas Mount Desert need allocate only 45% to achieve a similar per capita budget for its children (Superintendent, 1995, Interview). Guidance counselors at the consolidated Mount Desert

Regional High School report that Tremont's children are well prepared and are over-represented in the upper percentile of students at the high school. Yet, few students from Tremont go on to post-secondary education. Only 76.% of Tremont residents are high school graduates and only 16.8% have college degrees (Commerce, 1990:1 - 10).

Similar disparities exist between the education of immigrants to the state and native-born people. Statistics show that relatively few Maine natives have the education to take professional level jobs that already exist in Maine but are being filled by people "from away" with advanced degrees.

> The Maine economy employed 158,000 owners, managers, professionals and technicians in 1989, paying them, on average, 63% more than other workers received (U.S. Census, 1990). People born in Maine , however, were under-represented among these highly paid occupations. While 67% of the state's labor force were born in Maine only 53% of the owners, managers, professionals and technicians were born here. The other 47% had migrated to Maine "from away." *
>
> This disparity mirrors a similar disparity in education. In 1989, the state economy employed 40,000 persons with graduate or professional training beyond college, paying them, on average, 95% more than other workers (U.S. Census, 1990). Just 33% of these highly educated workers were born in Maine; the other 67% were born elsewhere.* And while the economy employed another 225,000 people with formal training beyond high school, paying them, on average, 39% more than workers with less schooling, only 57% of these workers were born in Maine.
>
> In short, the educational attainments of Maine people prevent us from obtaining many of the best jobs in our own economy.
>
> *. The data exclude students and the percentages have been standardized to eliminate the effects of differences in the sex and age composition of native and immigrant populations.
>
> Sherwood, private correspondence

These figures make us ask what deters Maine students from seeking higher education and how the handicap of limited education prevents them from taking advantage of professional jobs in the state.

The reasons many Maine students do not seek post-secondary education are complex, involving deeply rooted cultural patterns and the perception that opportunities are limited in a rural economy. Kim McBride, Program Director of the Maine Aspirations Compact sums them up by saying "kids think being from Maine is a liability" (McBride:1994). This attitude is based on two misconceptions: first, that Maine students are not capable which is inaccurate as shown by their excellent performance on the National Assessment of Educational Performance. (Maine Dept. of Education, 1994:3). The second misconception is that no good jobs exist for highly trained workers, which the statistic s show is not the case.

Educators rarely address the critical issue of culture in designing programs. Dean Robert Cobb, who has conducted extensive research on aspirations, reports that authorities are quick to accept many of his findings but reluctant to value the quality of life traditional rural people treasure. For example, many think men who dig clams or worms have hard lives and low-status jobs. Though digging is literally back-breaking, what most people don't appreciate is that diggers are self-employed, make their own decisions about when and where to work and where they live, have time for their families and for hunting, fishing, and other leisure activities. They also can earn up to $40,000 a year. Cobb says that the clam and worm diggers his team interviewed were pleased with their lives and their quality of life and had little incentive to pursue higher education (Dean Robert Cobb, Interview).

Guidance counselors and teachers do take culture and socio-economic status into account when they make decisions about tracking by evaluating a

student's past performance and potential. However, if they rely on their stereoptyped understanding of students' cultural background to make judgments about tracking, they may ignore individual interest, aptitude and potential. Perhaps as a result of this limiting vision, students in the general and vocational tracks, as well as alternative programs in the island high school seem to come disproportionately from native-born families.

Reba Page and Penelope Eckert have shown that schools can use tracking to segregate minority students who are not expected to do as well as students from higher socio-economic strata. Creating separate tracks or schools within heterogeneous schools insulates groups of students from each other. The school thereby, placates the fears of middle-class parents but at the expense of minority students. (Page and Valli, 1990; Eckert, 1989). Students may be tracked simply by the counselor's experience of what similar students have achieved not by an individual's innate ability or goals. When the students are native-born Anglo-Protestants, the discrimination may be more subtle, but it is no less insidious. Until educators recognize the cultural differences between rural and urban communities; between natives and people from away, they can not fully address the needs of the 28% of students in this country who attend rural schools.

I am reminded of Val Perkins, Principal of Tremont Elementary School, who regularly walks around his town, stopping at stores and fishing wharves to get into conversation with parents. " I'll go to the wharf and pretty soon someone will come up and we'll talk about the weather and then the fishing, and after a while he or she will ask what is really on his or her mind : How is my child doing in school? " It is hard for some of these parents to come to school, even the village elementary school. It is impossible for many to go to the consolidated

high school because they feel intimidated, and if they did not graduate from high school they fear there is little academic guidance they can offer their children.

Lofty, who taught writing for many years on Deer Isle, Maine learned to understand 'where his students were coming from':

> I began by accepting the invitation of my ex-students to go fishing and to learn more how their lives beyond the school house had formed and informed their time within it. I had realized that the hostility to writing was part of a broad-based resistance to schooling and reflected what I saw as a disparity between home and school.
>
> Lofty, 1994:2

John Lofty began to understand assumptions underlying behavior that was so easily misunderstood by teachers less interested in the culture of their students. He saw that " students' anti-social behaviour during writing class was a dramatic critique of the perceived relevance of writing to their future lives. For the most part reading and writing were not seen as means essential to reaching these goals" (Ibid: 3).

Lofty's students wanted to join their fathers in fishing and were learning from them the complex skills required to deal with sophisticated equipment and variables of season, tide, and weather. In the forewrd Alan C. Purves writes:

> Against, the world of the clock-and-bell school stands the world of the lobster fisher, the clam digger, the farmer, the cook, the writer, and the scientist. These are people for whom everything falls into its season, for whom the time to do things is not a regimented divisible time, but a time that evolves from the nature of the task - and from nature - the movement of the earth on its axis and around the sun.
>
> Idem: xi-xii

The school imposed a rigid and arbitrary schedule on students that was at odds with the rhythm of work they learned in their home culture. Alienated by the form students, soon learned to distrust the content.

However, as Lofty and other educational anthropologists suggest one road over which to reach students is their 'home' culture.

> For students to experience their time in school as authentic and meaningful, they need to see that what is important in their daily lives can be part of the ethos and programme of the school. Students need to feel that their teachers understand the future work that many students have chosen, but that teachers can offer also the means by which students can exceed a traditional life style if they so choose. When students enter an institution that does not recognize the contours of their own lives and values, their time in this setting becomes inauthentic and alienating.
>
> Ibid: 203

Lofty's study focuses on the differences in use of time by students from traditional Maine families. However, his study shows that there is a cultural chasm between these students and the schools they attend. Ignoring this chasm only perpetuates student alienation and makes it less likely they will want to have anything to do with the education system when they mature. Sadly, it may only be when native-born adults exert more pressure on the school that school personnel will address their concerns.

This argument may seem a discursion from our central question : what causes the imbalance in representation of native-born Mainers on local school boards? However, I believe that difference between the culture of middle-class in-migrants and native-born Mainers first becomes evident in schools. If a native-born child learns from peers and school personnel that his or her culture is second-rate, if s/he feels discriminated against and his or her self-esteem is diminished, it is highly unlikely, I think that the student will try to serve on a school board when s/he is an adult I think this process of alienation begins very early and that many forces in the culture and history of the area reinforce it.

A rural child learns a great deal from his or her parents. Chores have real meaning and consequence for family economy. Fathers can't fish if children

haven't baited the pockets or whittled the pegs that hold lobster claws open; if wood isn't split, the house will be cold. Rural children learn how to take responsibility, to deal with variables of weather, season; to use and fix complicated equipment, to regulate their own schedules. But when they go to school they are treated as if they an incapable of dealing responsibly with their own lives, having, for example, even to get a pass to go to the bathroom. Some find that their own skills and knowledge are denigrated or misunderstood and they begin to feel undervalued.

There have already been significant changes in rural life, the result of pressures from outside forces. Using the earlier example, the number of illegitimate births in Hancock County has risen dramatically, from 3.2% of live births in 1960 to 25% of live births in 1990. Grandparents of babies born out-of-wedlock may feel terrible conflict, wanting to help their daughters and grandchildren but being ashamed of illegitimacy and concerned about their daughter's ability to raise the child on her own. This is problem, of course, confronts grandparents of illegitimate children born in other segments of our society. We cite these numbers simply to show the enormous changes and resulting pressures on rural families.

Schooling can be a bridge for any student - a passport to dreams and a tool for dealing with the challenge of simply being alive. Unfortunately, many students who feel like second-class citizens in their own schools adopt a passive-aggressive stance. Children from traditional rural culture who are primarily white Anglo-Protestant react to "academic" culture as do some other minority children. Though there are regional differences, traditional culture shares many traits and, because it is a subordinate culture under pressure, shares elements with the culture of urban minority students.

Ignorance is not bliss nor does it provide the protection rural communities need. For example, until the mid-1980's rural communities voted against zoning proposals. Large development companies made a practice of exploiting communities in Downeast , Maine that might attract vacationers but had no restrictions against development. Towns were powerless to stop high-density condominium and lakefront projects as long as developers met very loose state regulations. After construction of such projects communities understood the importance of protective zoning and many voted to implement regulations, but too few saw their vulnerability before serious damage to the social and physical environment had occurred.

I believe rural students can become empowered by the strengths of their culture, choosing elements they want to retain or change. We believe rural education must address the needs of all students, however, the future of rural communities may rest on the shoulders of the young people who appreciate where they have come from, want to explore the larger world and return home with their energy, talent and experience. It would seem to make sense that rural programs encourage such students.

I have identified traits that characterize rural culture. We can ignore these traits, or we can build with them. The strengths of rural culture such as a strong work ethic, individuality, strong sense of family and community, love of 'place', pragmatism, humor, relative lack of alienation of youth, the importance of quality of life and relative disinterest in status and prestige and materialism suggest avenues for reaching and educating rural students. We ignore these strengths and the concomitant cultural barriers in rural culture at the peril of good education.

I think all rural students must be educated well so they can make informed choices. However a student chooses to make a living as a lobsterman

or caretaker, as a banker, teacher or by starting his or her own business he or she will still need a rigorous academic education. People in rural areas , like citizens anywhere, need to be able to read, analyze, write and think in order to fulfill the diverse roles they will have during a lifetime : citizens, parents, friend, voters, volunteers, and to deal with the many changes confronting them.

ROLE THEORY

THE THEORY

Anthropologist Ralph Linton first used the terms status and role to describe important concepts of social structure. Linton " used the term status to refer to a position within a social system, and the associated word 'role'... to denote the behavior expected of the incumbent of that status" (Murphy, 1989:57). Role then may be defined as " a typified response to a typified expectation...and society provides the script for all the *dramatis personae*" (Berger, 1963:95). The terms are often used differently, as for example, by Getzels when he writes: "Roles represent positions, offices, or statuses within an institution..."(Gaynor, 1995:29). In this paper I will adhere to the anthropological definition of the terms.

Use of these terms becomes theory when we add key elements. Statuses are either "achieved" such as the status of teacher, construction worker, librarian; or "ascribed" such as the statuses into which we are born , grow or "fall" such as daughter, nephew, spinster, or a victim of crime. It becomes immediately clear that more technologically developed societies create a plethora of ascribed statuses, while those more technologically primitive offer fewer such options. Achieved statuses can be created, such as "computer programmer" which is obviously not possible without the invention of the computer, and disappear such as "ice man", a status made obsolete by invention of the refrigerator.

Role theory has profound implications for our understanding of social structure and human interaction. Berger summarizes its significance of by stating that " in a sociological perspective, identity is socially bestowed, socially sustained and socially transformed" (Berger, 1963:98). He reminds us that George Herbert Mead described this process :

> in which the genesis of the self is interpreted as being one and the same event as the discovery of society. The child finds out who he is as he learns what society is... All this learning occurs, and can only occur, in interaction with other human beings, be it the parents or whoever else raises the child. The child first takes on role vis-à-vis what Mead calls his "significant others," that is those persons who deal with him intimately.
>
> Berger, 1963:99

Children develop their personalities, which are , in part " the sum total of the individual's social statuses and of the ways they are adjusted to each other" (Murphy, 1989:64) in a process that is largely "unconscious [and] unreflecting" and "unplanned" (Berger, 1963:96, 109). Identity , as seen by anthropologists and sociologists, is "socially bestowed" and malleable. Our identity needs continuous affirmation from others and is surprisingly vulnerable when it is withdrawn. One has only to look at prisoners of war, or incarcerated criminals to see how easily our social identity can be changed.

Statuses are usually linked in dyadic pairs. Each individual in the pair has rights and responsibilities that are reciprocal with the linked status. For example, a teacher has certain rights, certain expectations s/he can reasonably make of her or his students. At the same time she has responsibilities to those

students, therefore, one person's rights become to some extent the other person's responsibilities.

Definitions of appropriate behavior or role within a status may change and individuals will interpret roles differently. This range of variation allows for change in both definition and interpretation of the role, and offers individuals opportunity to develop their distinct personalities. Role and status though proscribed and prescribed by society are usually not suffocating harnesses, but guide and order human inter-action. "Society can exist by virtue of the fact that most of the time most peoples' definitions of the most important situations at least coincide approximately" (Berger, 1963:94).

In modern industrial society statuses tend to be narrowly defined or "functionally specific" and "single-stranded" which helps individuals separate and organize them into manageable compartments. In a less technologically developed society the statuses are more widely defined or "functionally diffuse" and "broad-stranded" and members may bear many statuses simultaneously such as chief, clansman, mother. "Simple, primitive societies have all the role visibility of a small town plus the complicating factor that most of their statuses are of the diffuse variety" (Murphy, 1989:64-65).

Another key concept in role theory is "role set" which divides our statuses into groups of "other actors with whom we are engaged in a certain status" (Murphy, 1989: 64). These actors share an interest, activity or relationship within a certain context and can, within a defined range, exert pressure on the

status holder to change his behavior or role. A fundamental corollary is that individuals try to separate their role sets through "role segregation" which isolates the audience from the actors and well as the actors from other actors Murphy,1989:63).

Segregation of role sets, has important implications for our understanding of the behavior of native-born Mainers in regards to local school board membership. Murphy points out that "segregation can be accomplished fairly easily in urban, industrial society, for its members are hidden by sheer numbers and may lose themselves in any of the myriad corners of city life... A small town may present another problem, one of overvisibility..."(Murphy, 1989:64).

Potential candidates for the school board who are native-born may be deterred from serving because they are more deeply "embedded in a *role set*" (Gaynor, 1995 :30). People in their role set may have conflicting needs and opinions which make fulfilling the status of school board member uncomfortable and confrontational. Candidates "from away" are not only freer of such binding associations, they may also view the nature of the process differently.

The concept of "role distance" first used by Irving Goffman suggests another key to understanding the behavior of native-born Mainers in their relationships with people "from away" (Berger, 1963:109). Goffman implies that individuals often play at a role, assuming behaviors that they do not avow either because they will gain , or at least minimize their losses. This "kind of duplicity is the only way by which human dignity can be maintained within the self-

awareness of people in such situations" (Idem). We may be more familiar with identifying this sort of behavior in groups that have been harshly discriminated against, but the "step'n'fetchit" mentality is used as a defense by many and probably by all of us at some point or in some relationship in our lives.

It follows that there are times in which we must perform two or more roles simultaneously that are contradictory or conflicting. Role conflict and multiple role conflict help us understand how individuals behave when statuses compete. As we increase the number of statuses open to individuals, inevitably conflict increases as do stresses on the individual. For example, women working outside their homes will experience role conflict when their children are sick but their professional responsibilities draw them to their offices.

An interesting concomitant to this principle is "ecstasy" which refers to the "act of standing or stepping outside (literally ekstasis) what is taken for granted. Ecstasy "transforms one's awareness of society in such a way that giveness becomes possibility" (Berger, 1963:137). It is extraordinarily difficult for an individual to remove him or herself from the cobweb of statuses and roles each requires, but it is possible. We are still responsible for our actions even though society has formed our potential. In Maine, we can see that few individuals are able to stand outside the demands of local culture, and it may be only the extraordinary individual who, therefore, is able to fulfill the status of school board member.

APPLYING ROLE THEORY

Definition of status.

In the past many prominent members of the community were elected to the school boards. They were respected for their knowledge of the community and the needs of students. One of the reasons that people "from away" are now being elected to boards is that they are perceived as being wiser, better educated and better able to meet the demands of the job.

Rights and responsibilities: dyadic pairs

Native-born Mainers tend to identify the rights and responsibilities of school board members in much the same way as people "from away" do. That is, school board members must represent the needs of the children balancing those with the needs of the community, handle the demands of the job particularly fiscal responsibilities, and maintain respect in the community. However, what they want from the school differs. While people "from away" stress the quality of education, conservative Yankees are more concerned with keeping the focus of education narrow rather than liberal and maintaining local control. No one with whom I spoke could identify particular "rights" associated with being a school board member.

Functionally specific/single-strands

People "from away" live in a less "tangled web" than native-born residents as they have left many of their associations and strands behind by migrating. Younger people tend to have professional jobs that brought them to the island. Retirees may have more diffused responsibilities as volunteers who become involved with many organizations and activities; however, they do not have responsibilities of child care or care of other relatives.

Functionally Diffuse multi-stranded

Native-born residents tend to have extensive family ties as well as many long-term connections to the community. In addition, many hold multiple jobs because it is hard to make a living doing just one thing in an economy that lacks a strong base in production and is so tied to the seasons. A woman may work as a bank teller, knit for a cooperative, crochet pockets for her husband who is a lobsterman and his friends, take in sewing and sell home-grown flowers. Though I have not made a study of this phenomenon in any depth, it is a characteristic of the culture that I have observed for a long time.

Role set:

Native-born people tend to have a larger number of people in their role set. Theirs is a much more densely woven web of relationships. Not only do they have constituents if elected to the boards, but they are also widely and deeply connected to family that lives nearby. Most people "from away" do not have family members living in close proximity. Native-born residents are also more likely to have an extensive network of childhood friends, community members, neighbors, and co-workers.

Suminsby, a former school board member and fifth generation Mainer who grew up in Seal Harbor, explains that these extensive networks actually prevent native-born people from running because they fear the embarrassment of losing an election. When I asked him why they would assume they would lose particularly as they knew so many people he replied "it is due to the basic pessimism of the culture," and continued by noting that people "from away" would not fear embarrassment as they aren't as well known, had a ready made excuse (being "from away") and were not, by nature or perhaps nurture, pessimistic.

Role segregation

Because their role sets are larger in number and may extend back in time over decades and generations, native-born people have a much harder time segregating role sets than do people "from away." The difficulty in keeping people from different roles sets separate can lead to conflict. For example, if a board member has a mother or grand-mother living in the community s/he may be more aware of the needs of the elderly than if the parent or grandparent lives far away. However, s/he will also have to deal with an irritated older relative if /she votes for measures that increase taxes. People "from away" live in greater isolation within the community although they have much more extensive contacts beyond the island than native-born residents.

Role Distance:

We become the self we see reflected back to us by other people. Bob Suminsby describes Seal Harbor, where he grew up, as a feudal society in which most native-born people who stayed worked for the affluent summer community. Summer residents could be very generous with rewards such as housing, education for children, and help in time of crisis, etc. However, they did not offer a good salary over which their employees had the power of decision and control but as a benefit of service that the employer gave at his whim and over which the recipient had no choice or control The reasons behind this may lie in the tradition of charity , " the white man s burden" that prevailed in upper class society, however, it carried with it the message that native-born recipients would make poor choices if the decisions about use of money were left to them. Suminsby sees that one effect of this arrangement is erosion of self-esteem and self-respect leading to the "step'n fetchit" mentality and role distance. As native-born Mainers distance themselves from the role of decision-making

(decisive), fiscally responsible adults they also lose interest in serving on boards that must make decisions, and begin to believe they are not capable of serving well.

Role conflict:

Native-born Mainers, living in a society in which many roles are ascribed and multi-stranded and with a larger number of people in their role sets will inevitably meet conflict because they are required to fulfill two statuses with contradictory behavior. This is obvious when we think about laws governing conflict of interest. The more complex the role set, the more people in the set, the more likely the individual is to be in a situation in which there is a financial conflict of interest. This principle also pertains to more subtle areas of potential conflict, and may be one reason Mainers avoid achieved statuses requiring responsibility and decision-making that may create dissension.

Perhaps the most important reason native-born people do not want to serve on school boards is financial. The economy is fragile and few local families can afford to have one of their wage-earners heavily involved in an activity that does not produce income such as serving on a school board. The role of bread-winner conflicts with the role of volunteer. If people do volunteer they are more likely to serve in organizations such as the volunteer fire departments. These groups suit the culture in ways that school boards no longer do. Not only are they social groups, organized for emergencies, but there are few policy decisions they have to make and little sustained work besides ongoing training. Anyone can join and leadership is relatively unstratified and informal.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS BASED ON ACCULTURATION AND ROLE THEORY

Because acculturation theory and role theory are closely connected , it is difficult to separate recommendations springing from either perspective. Although there are many ways the following suggestions might be presented, I have divided them by stakeholders they would benefit and identified the theory associated with the recommendation whenever possible.

FURTHER RESEARCH

It will be difficult to effect change in this community, and it seems critically important that we document the need for change. If we can show that the imbalance of representation is affecting the performance of native-born students and demonstrate to stakeholders that something important is at stake, there is more chance they will listen sympathetically and creatively. I believe that everyone in the island community is a stakeholder. The population is very small and the education of each child is vital to the life of the island.

In order to be more certain about the viability of the following suggestions and to develop other recommendations it seems important that someone do further research. It is, perhaps, even more important to learn about the effect of under-representation on students from native-born families. If we are to enlist the help and interest of the community in making changes we must document and dramatize the existence of the problem. I recommend that the researchers use the philosophy and methods of action research as much as possible.

To fund the research, I would approach Superintendent Colter who is a stake-holder and the Maine School Boards Association which is also interested in my work. I would try to get their support for a start-up grant of $5000.00 to cover supplies, office expenses and employing a part-time assistant for three months. Many of the people in our "summer colony" are interested in education and have access to significant amounts of money through family charitable foundations. I would first approach Roger A. the CEO of a very large company , and client of ours, who comes from a lower-middle class family. His father was a superintendent of schools in a rural area and I think he would support to this work. With his donation in place I would approach other affluent summer people as well as the Maine Community Foundation which supports many projects on Mount Desert Island.

It is vital that there is media coverage adequate to inform people about the project, its goals, personnel, and the time-frame in which it will take place. This coverage should be disseminated by the local cable TV station, the local newspaper and radio station, school newsletters and perhaps through churches (there is no synagogue on the island) and in leaflets available at the island post offices. Coverage must continue throughout the life of the project.

I suggest using the following research methods:

Interviewing Opinion Leaders:

I recommend that the researchers conduct in-depth interviews with at least three opinion leaders from each of the four island communities. These

discussions may uncover deeply held values and opinions that would not otherwise be discovered. I suggest that the researchers do the in-depth interviewing before their other research so they can incorporate results of this work into the survey instruments.

Telephone Survey:

Although using the telephone to do a random survey may omit important segments of the population, and just the ones we are trying to reach, it is an economical method in time and expense. I recommend developing a questionnaire and administering it to one twentieth of the population of about 12,000 year-round residents. (First researchers should find out how many island residents do not have a telephone and abandon this method if the percentage is high or add alternative methods of collecting data). I realize this is a very ambitious project and hope that students at College of the Atlantic and members of the Action Research Team would help in the under-taking. The survey would try to elicit reasons year-round people do not serve on the boards and their recommendations for change. One tangential benefit to the survey might be educating the public about the need for change.

Focus Groups:

I suggest forming focus groups of opinion leaders in each of the four island communities to discuss the issue and formulate recommendations for change. It is important that there be a well-trained facilitator present to enable these discussions and someone to record what is said. Focus groups will help

identify reasons for the imbalance in representation and make many people in the community aware of the issue. I hope this will help convince them to become stakeholders.

House-to-House Survey:

I realize that this is a very expensive and time-consuming method of investigation. I think ideally, the researchers should sample opinion in face-to-face interviews with randomly selected households in each of the island villages. If possible, I suggest researchers complete between 50 and 100 such interviews.

INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS:

It is important to enlist more stakeholders in solving this problem. The research process itself may help make people aware of the problem and want to help in its solution. In order to do that I would first discuss results of the research with Superintendent Colter and current school board members. There are several avenues over which we might reach latent stakeholders once we have established the significance of the problem and the need for change. The most effective means would be through direct contact. I suggest holding meetings with all school board members, teachers, administrators and staff at the four elementary school and the high school; parent groups and civic/social groups such as The Lions, church groups etc.. It will also be important to enlist the help of people in the media so that they publicize our project sympathetically.

Awareness of Culture: (*acculturation theory*)

We must make teachers, administrators, school personnel, parents and community members aware of the problem of imbalance in school board representation and enlist their help in creating a solution. I think few of these people have realized that there is such an imbalance in representation and do not take it into account in their planning. I want to make them aware of the cultural differences between native-born Mainers and people " from away" so that they are more sensitive to the needs of each.

I saw an example of the importance of such awareness when I was the guest teacher at a high school class recently. Talking about population changes over the past 15 years and the impact of demographic changes on education and housing, I asked students why the drop-out rate in Hancock County is the highest in the state. They had several suggestions including the fact that in much poorer Aroostook County the schools close during the potato harvest so students can work with their families. In coastal Hancock County the schools are not so accommodating, in part because there is no single season or crop.

RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING PARENTS:

Parent Centers: (*role theory*)

The most effective way to involve the parents, grandparents and other relatives in the school might be to create parent centers in the four elementary school and the high school, and to involve these people much more fully in the daily life of each school. If native-born parents, who have not fared well during their own schooling, can begin to feel more comfortable in the schools they may

want to be more fully involved in the education of their, perhaps even by running for election to the school board. Helping them redefine the status and the role of parent and community member could be a critical first step. The Institute for Responsive Education and the League of Schools Reaching Out have done a superb job of suggesting ways to establish and use parent centers in schools and the benefits of such center. I would only add that centers such as "HomeWorkPlace" described in a plan I wrote from Tremont School, may be particularly important and beneficial in rural schools with relatively isolated populations where the school is the focal point of social life and a source of great pride for the community (Lawrence, April, 1994).

RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING STUDENTS

I think it is important that we improve the quality of life at school for native-born students otherwise it is unlikely that they will want to serve the schools in any capacity when they are adults.

Ombudsman: (*acculturation and role theory)*

I recommend that the school community appoint an ombudsman to represent native-born students. This person might be a parent, teacher, or community member but must be someone who has the trust and confidence of the year-round community. The ombudsman's job would be to communicate with students and parents who are native-born to learn about their concerns and needs and then to transmit these to the school board , Superintendent, and other

school personnel. The Ombudsman might oversee implementation of other policies relating to native-born students such as holding workshops on culture.

New Courses:

Anthropology: (*acculturation theory*)

I think teachers, administrators and students alike should learn key concepts and perspectives of anthropology. Anthropology helps teach the importance of culture, appreciation for people from different cultures, the strength of one's own culture and ways to use those strengths. I suggest that concepts of anthropology be incorporated into the curriculum at all levels in appropriate ways including a 9th grade skills course in social studies and as an elective for seniors.

Entrepreneurship: (*role and acculturation theory*)

I recommend that each school create a project that teaches the skills and habits of mind necessary for entrepreneurship. Such a project might be setting up a food delivery service for island restaurants or inventing and producing a product for sale. These two examples may sound as if they are beyond the capabilities of students, but similar projects have been launched successfully in other rural schools. Jonathan Sher, who teaches at the University of South Carolina, has done extensive research in this field and thinks it is critical to the economic revival of rural places that rural students learn to create work instead of passively accepting that there is no work or that they must leave their homes and families to find it.

Students would learn to analyze a problem; create a workable solution, organize and manage a small business, deal with budgets, cost-analysis, profit and loss statements, consumer demands, etc. In short, a successful project in entrepreneurship would show students that it is possible to think assertively and create productive enterprises that sustain and improve the island economy and not so incidentally, their own.

RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING THE COMMUNITY

Community Forums: (*acculturation and role theory*)

The problem with holding community forums is that the people who will attend are those who already communicate with the school. It is less likely that parents who are reluctant to communicate with the school will attend. If the school decides to hold such meetings there must be specific and short-term goals. Through a process of creating and meeting such goals, native-born parents may work through their reluctance to commit to abstract and long-term goals. These forums should be held in private houses in each of the four communities on the island. Ideally, "opinion leaders" would host the meetings and everyone in the community would be welcome though, on a rotating basis, certain parents might be invited.

Celebrations of Maine Culture and Achievement: *(acculturation theory)*

The schools should actively celebrate the strengths of Maine culture and successes of its students. Though these kind of celebrations can founder on

banner waving and self-congratulation, I think few coastal Mainers know how well students from the state are doing. Equally, however, they need to understand that coastal students do not do as well as those from interior Maine in key measures like drop-out rate and the percentage of students who pursue higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS AFFECTING PRESENT AND FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD (*role theory*)

Rotating Membership:

The community should consider alternative ways of selecting people for membership on the school boards. One possibility would be to rotate membership throughout the community in the same way as people are now chosen for jury duty. Obviously, there are important differences in time commitment to consider. However, a policy review board composed of people who served for no longer than two months, might offer helpful input to the elected school board members and superintendent.

Nominating Committee: (*role theory*)

A small group of people who reflect the distribution of native-born and people "from away" might be formed to nominate candidates for the school board in each town. Although many citizens might object, and a compromise might be nomination of a partial slate, which would help assure fair representation. As I mentioned earlier, a similar method was used earlier.

Awards for Service: (*acculturation theory*)

The usual rewards for service may not work in a population that avoids publicity and individual recognition. The school should research this to be sure, but might consider giving awards for service that mean something to the community. For example, a plaque and a dinner might not make a difference (though they could) but tax abatement for service on a school board might !

School Board Council Pilot Sites: (*role theory*)

The Maine School Boards Association suggests creation of School Board Council pilot sites.

> for testing the concept of schools councils as a vehicle for broadening the involvement of teachers and other school employees, parents and other community members. The State Board should select sites from among a group of volunteer schools. If possible, schools from a variety of district types should be chosen, including SAD's, CSDs, unions and municipal schools. School council membership and functions should be flexible but should include representatives of major stakeholders in the school and community. The local school should select members of the school council. The principal should chair the school council.
>
> Committee, 1995: 45

The Election Process: (*role theory*) Stakeholders; potential candidates

The community needs to consider if there should be any changes in the existing procedures for election. Are there elements in the process that deter native-born people from running for election? I think there are but would like to have this confirmed by others or by deeper research of my own, before making specific recommendations. Perhaps, however, native-born candidates would be

more comfortable if they did not have to share their opinions with others through "The Bar Harbor Times" but could meet frequently with small groups in people's houses.

Demands of the Job: (*role theory*)

The demands of the job of school board member have grown enormously over the past forty years, just as the time people have to fulfill these obligations has diminished. When I was researching the composition of school boards I was amazed to see the escalation of work and time required by the job graphically portrayed by the amount of space given to minutes of meetings. From 1950 through 1979, five years worth of minutes fit into one medium size spiral binder. After 1979 the binders are larger and accommodate only a year or two of meetings. By 1992 it requires three large binders to hold the minutes for one year.

Not only has the time required for the job escalated, but the expertise required has as well. School Board members are now responsible for an enormous range of duties.

> School boards possess broad authority to manage the schools under their jurisdiction. As lay boards, they ably reflect community concerns and sensibilities and are well equipped to establish community wide goals and policies. In addition to their goals and policy setting role, school boards currently hire and fire all school personnel, engage in collective bargaining, establish local education budgets, adopt a general course of study and otherwise provide for the education of children in grades K - 12... When school boards are diverted from their broad policy setting role and become embroiled in the details of school management, they not only become less effective, they prevent professional educators from performing the jobs they have been hired to do.
>
> Committee, 1995: 42

In the appendix I have included information given to newly elected school board members which shows that they will be required to deal with very specific rules, regulations and laws and expected to have a working knowledge of these.

In a recent report the "Committee to Study Organizational and Tax Issues in Public Schools" in Maine suggests that " the role of the school board should be reaffirmed as that of making policy. Free of details of school government, boards can focus on broad policy objectives that advance the quality of education and improve its efficiency" (Committee, 1995:43). I agree with this, and think that making this fundamental change in the definition of the job would open it to more members of the native-born community. I think board members should be responsible for discussing and creating policy with the help of a good facilitator, perhaps the Superintendent, who can elicit their opinions and guide discussion. Although a poor facilitator might discourage free discussion, I am hopeful that would not happen.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Maine State Law:

The laws of the State of Maine governing the duties and responsibilities of school boards will make it difficult to institute change. For example, Title 20-AA of the Maine Revised Statutes offers three acceptable "methods for representation" : subdistrict representation; weighted votes; and at-large voting.

However, none of these permits a nominating committee or appointment of members to the committee. The law is very specific and demanding in its detail which works against even modest changes.

Maine School Boards Association:

Both inertia and momentum of MSBA, which tries to support Maine School Board Members, may instead discourage participation in school boards because it has set standards that make election of native-born Mainers unlikely. The MSBA has created its own structure and its bureaucrats may be reluctant to change, particularly if that change means they lose their jobs or power.

Community Perception of Progress:

The community's perception of progress will be a deterrent to a change in process of elections. People "from away" may see nominating or appointing school board members a retrogressive as may any elected rather than appointed representatives and other officials.

Cultural Themes:

As Bob Suminsby suggests, the culture of Mainers is fundamentally pessimistic and conservative. Mainers view change with suspicion by habit. Creating and implementing fundamental change is therefore, fundamentally difficult.

Economy:

The relatively weak economy of Maine is another barrier to change. It is increasingly difficult for native-born Mainers to compete with people "from away" financially and ,therefore, fewer of them can spend time in activities such as serving on school boards that do not bring in income.

Attractions of the Area:

Maine is one of the safest and most beautiful places to live in this country. Maine doesn't have serious earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and is well-prepared to deal with snow ! Hurricanes are usually weak by the time they get this far north. The climate, though extreme in the north, is considerably gentler along the coast. The crime rate is low and pollution, though increasingly serious, is still far less noticeable than in urban areas. There aren't even any poisonous snakes in the state! There are many attractions a including an excellent medical system, wonderful opportunities for recreation. No wonder many people are drawn to the state.

Demographic Changes:

As the population ages and there are proportionally fewer children, it may be harder to make changes affecting any aspect of the educational system including school boards.

MODEL COMPARISON AND CONCLUSIONS

Powerful forces operating on multiple levels influence our behavior. Acculturation theory helps us understand the strength of culture and culture change and the importance of history in determining our actions and reactions. Lewis Carroll was right when he said "It is a poor sort of memory that only looks backwards." Our memories also govern the way we look forwards as we project our past onto our future. Acculturation theory helps us analyze an organization, society, or culture through the large lens of culture and culture change.

Role theory, from the same tradition of cultural anthropology, looks at the statuses in a society and the way status-holders perform their roles. Role theory helps us understand ways in which cultures differ by narrowing our focus to individuals and sets of individuals. We can see the ways statuses are achieved and ascribed, identify members of role set, predict conflict when a person holds many roles, and compare the structure of statuses and role in one society with another.

Acculturation theory and role theory are complementary, differing in width of scope rather than perspective. Each supports the other, offering insights and recommendations for change that might not appear without looking at the problem from both levels. Each theory helps us understand the other as well as the data, and although each could stand alone, like a true partnership each is enriched by the other.

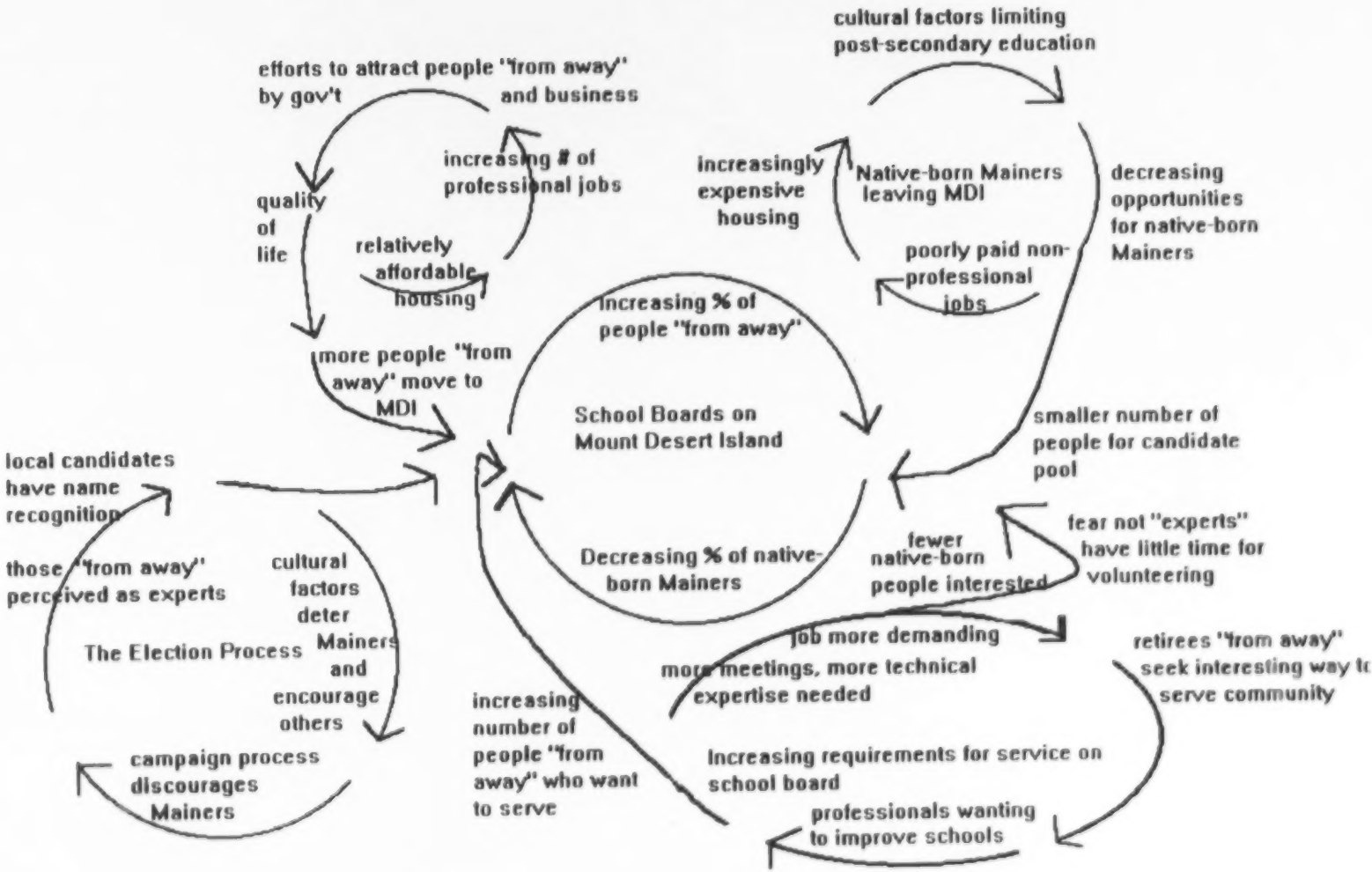
THE CAUSAL LOOP DIAGRAM

The causal loop diagram shows many of the factors that influence native-born people not to run for membership on local school boards. Let us look at these loops as they turn inexorably, reinforcing each other. The central circle shows that an increasing number of people "from away" are moving to the island and become "year-round summer people." As these people buy property real estate prices escalate making it very difficult for native-born residents to compete for housing. This is particularly true for young families and reflects clearly in the population statistics of the Town of Mount Desert, the most affluent township of the island. Only 34% of the population of this town is between the ages of zero and eighteen.

Loop 2 shows us that people from away are attracted to the island for many reasons. The State of Maine works hard to attract tourists and summer residents. Maine is known for its quality of life which offers safety, clean and beautiful environment, good medical care, lots of recreation; in short most of the things people are searching for. However, as more people move to the island, the population balance changes and year-round Mainers withdraw from leadership roles in their communities.

Loop 3 suggests that Native-born Mainers leave the island because they can not afford housing and can not qualify for well-paying jobs. Cultural factors such as fear of getting ahead, fear of getting advanced education because it will force them to move away make it even more difficult for native-born Mainers to compete for jobs and leadership positions. Not getting a post-secondary degree means local high school graduates only qualify for poorly paying jobs that force them to leave the island for economic reasons. Economic stresses make it more difficult for native-born people to give their time to service on school boards which further diminishes the pool of potential candidates.

CAUSAL LOOP DIAGRAM SHOWING FACTORS INFLUENCING COMPOSITION
of SCHOOL BOARDS ON MOUNT DESERT ISLAND, MAINE


efforts to attract people "from away" by gov't and business
increasing # of professional jobs
quality of life
relatively affordable housing
more people "from away" move to MDI
cultural factors limiting post-secondary education
increasingly expensive housing
Native-born Mainers leaving MDI
decreasing opportunities for native-born Mainers
poorly paid non-professional jobs
Increasing % of people "from away"
School Boards on Mount Desert Island
Decreasing % of native-born Mainers
smaller number of people for candidate pool
fewer native-born people interested
fear not "experts" have little time for volunteering
job more demanding
more meetings, more technical expertise needed
retirees "from away" seek interesting way to serve community
Increasing requirements for service on school board
professionals wanting to improve schools
increasing number of people "from away" who want to serve
local candidates have name recognition
those "from away" perceived as experts
The Election Process
cultural factors deter Mainers and encourage others
campaign process discourages Mainers

Loop 4 shows us that the increasing responsibilities of the job of school board member deters local people from competing for a position on the school boards as they fear they will not know enough or have time for the job. The role of a school board member has grown enormously, requiring more technical expertise and ability to deal with complex issues as well as demanding more time. Retirees and others "from away" who have more time to give and less financial stress move into this void and dominate the boards. Native-born Mainers may encounter more difficulty than people "from away" in segregating roles and avoiding role conflict.

Finally, Loop 5 demonstrates that the election process itself may work against local Maine people . Cultural factors I have described in detail deter Mainers but promote the candidacy of those from away who are more used to a process based on assertiveness and competition. The only factor I have found that works against this process that is name recognition enjoyed by some local candidates. On the other hand, I have also seen name recognition work against native-born candidates when the electorate thinks it knows the candidate so well that it doesn't want to elect him or her. In part, this is due to not wanting to have one of their own get ahead, and in part because they know so much that inevitably there is some "dirt" or reason to hold a grudge or feel circumspect. The unknown seems better than the known.

This system gyrates in one direction , reinforcing itself and intensifying over time. Only by implementing recommendations outlined below can we hope to make changes required to put the system back into balance.

CONCLUSION

The Superintendent of Schools alerted me to the problem of an imbalance in representation of native-born Mainers on local school boards. Initially, though I thought this would be an interesting subject, I did not see the larger forces behind individual decisions. I did not see the "drama" of the problem I chose to analyze. I now see that drama played out in many other arenas of island life including ownership of businesses, control of institutions of government, volunteer organizations, the arts and recreation. There is a struggle going on here between the culture of native-born Mainers and people "from away." Although many people talk about this struggle in anecdotal insights, and fragmented observations, few seem to have studied the affect of acculturation on the culture of native-born Mainers. Looking at the imbalance of representation of native-born Mainers on local school boards has given me a chance to begin a systematic analysis of acculturation which I hope to continue in my dissertation.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1: Percentage of Native-Born Mainers in Hancock County *

TABLE 2: Percentage of the Population that is Native-Born *

TABLE 3: Percentage of School Board Members Who Are Native-Born (data from informants)

TABLE 4: Percentage of School Board Members Who Are Native-Born (Line-Graph)

TABLE 5: Percentage of Town Budget Spent on Education (data from Superintendent's Office)

TABLE 6: Percentage of Households With Children (data from US Census, 1990)

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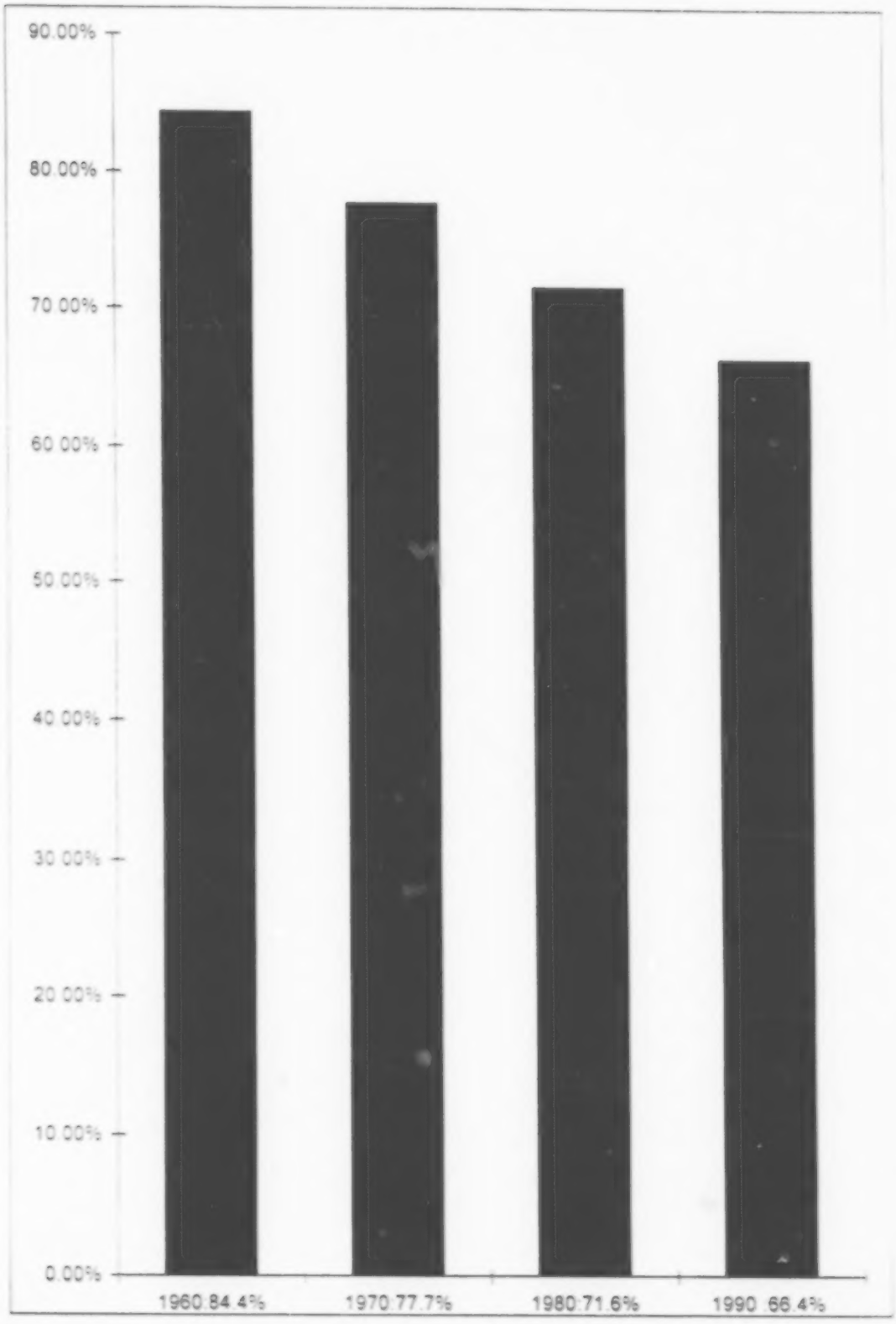
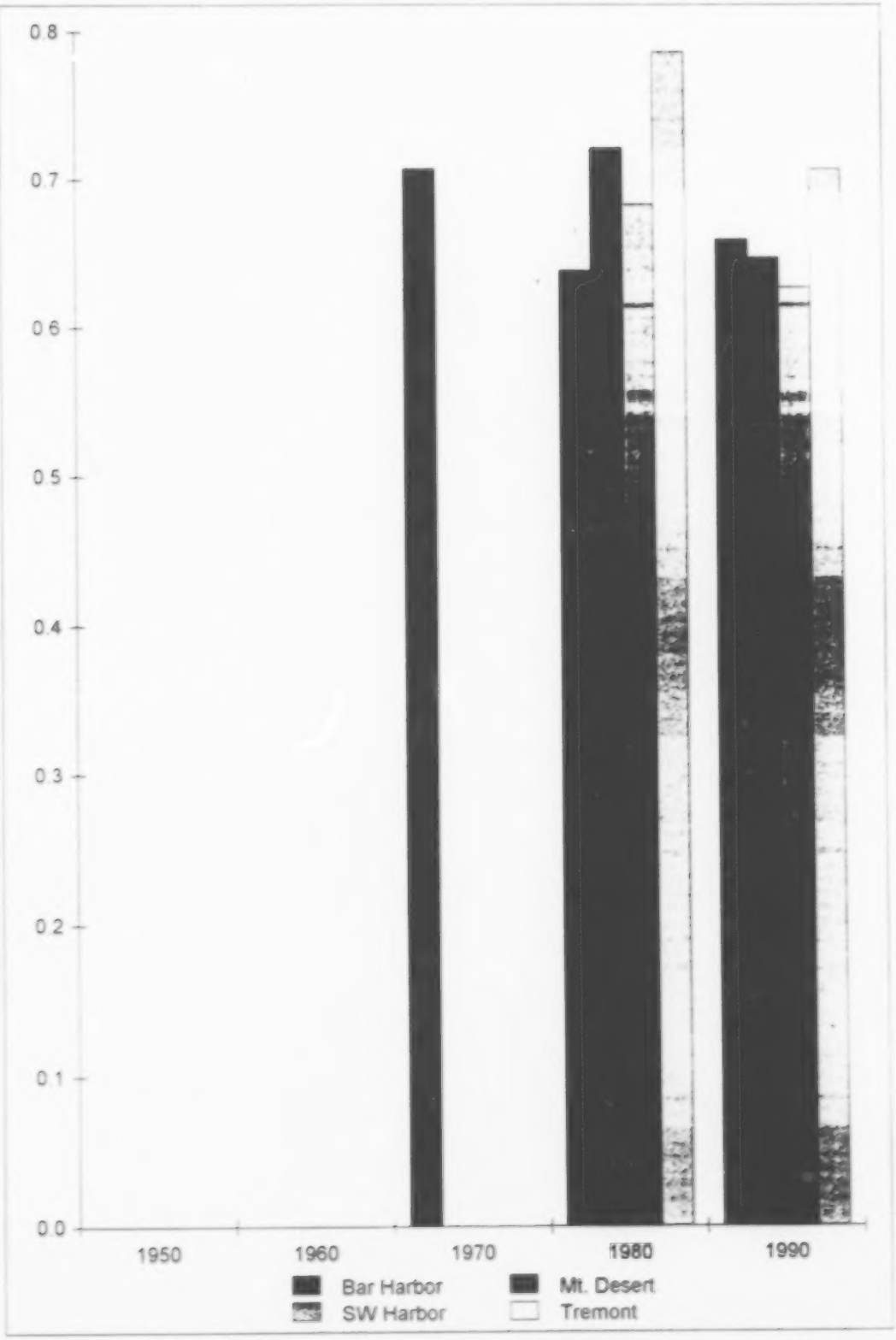
* Unfortunately, before 1980 data was only taken for towns over 2500 and before 1970 only by county (Commerce, Martin).

Table 1



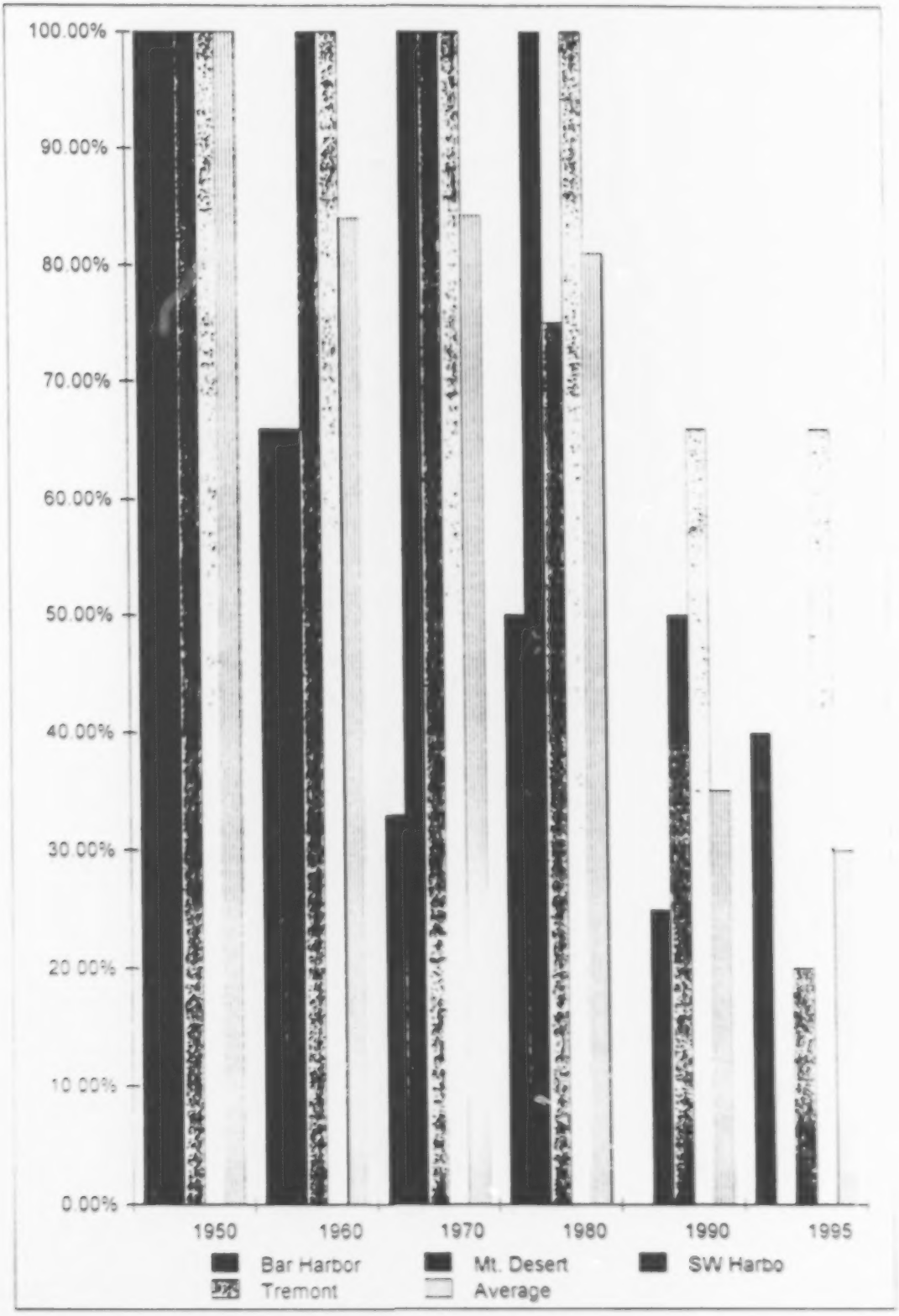
Percentage of Native-Born Mainers in Hancock County

TABLE 2



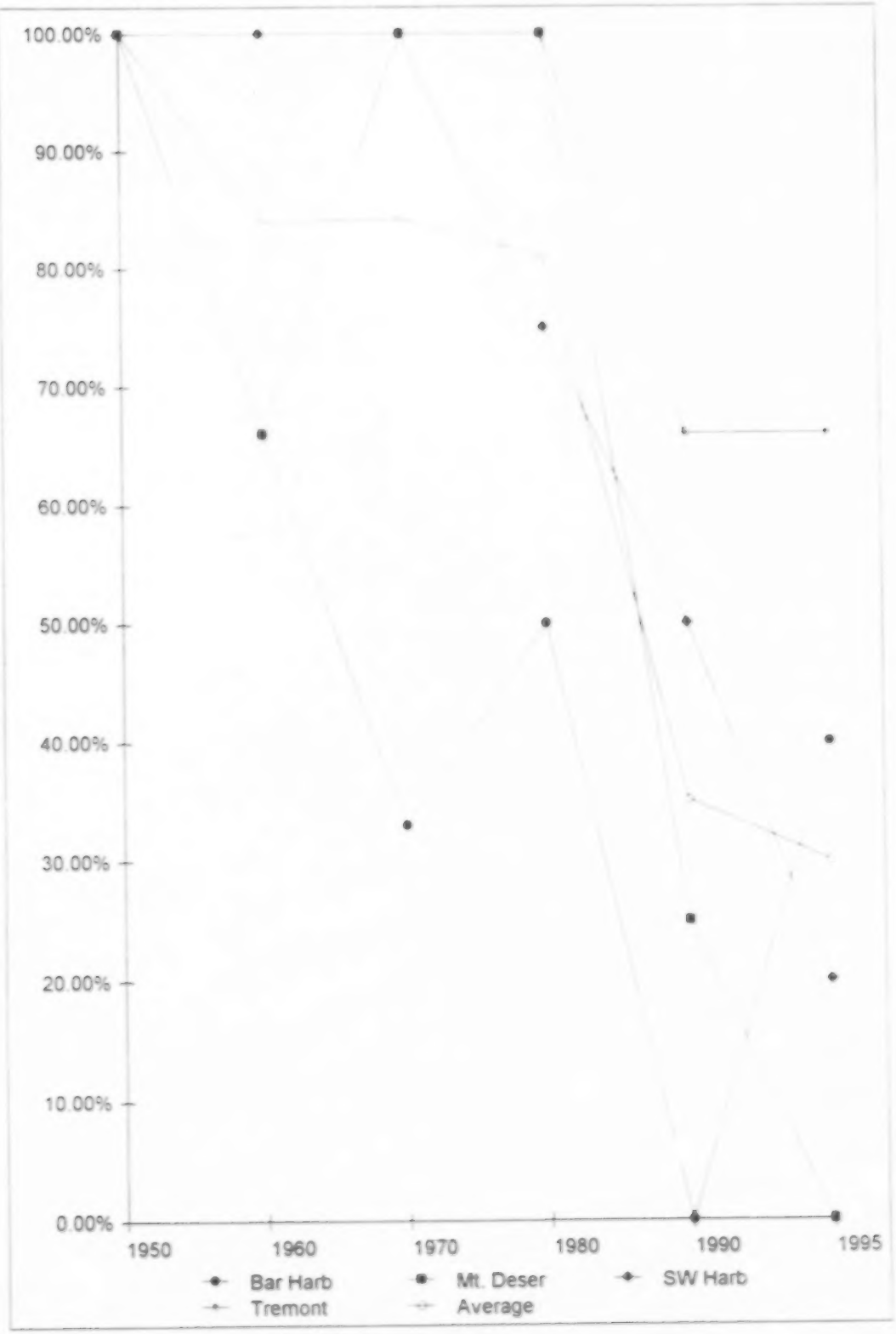
Percentage of Population that is Native-Born

TABLE 3



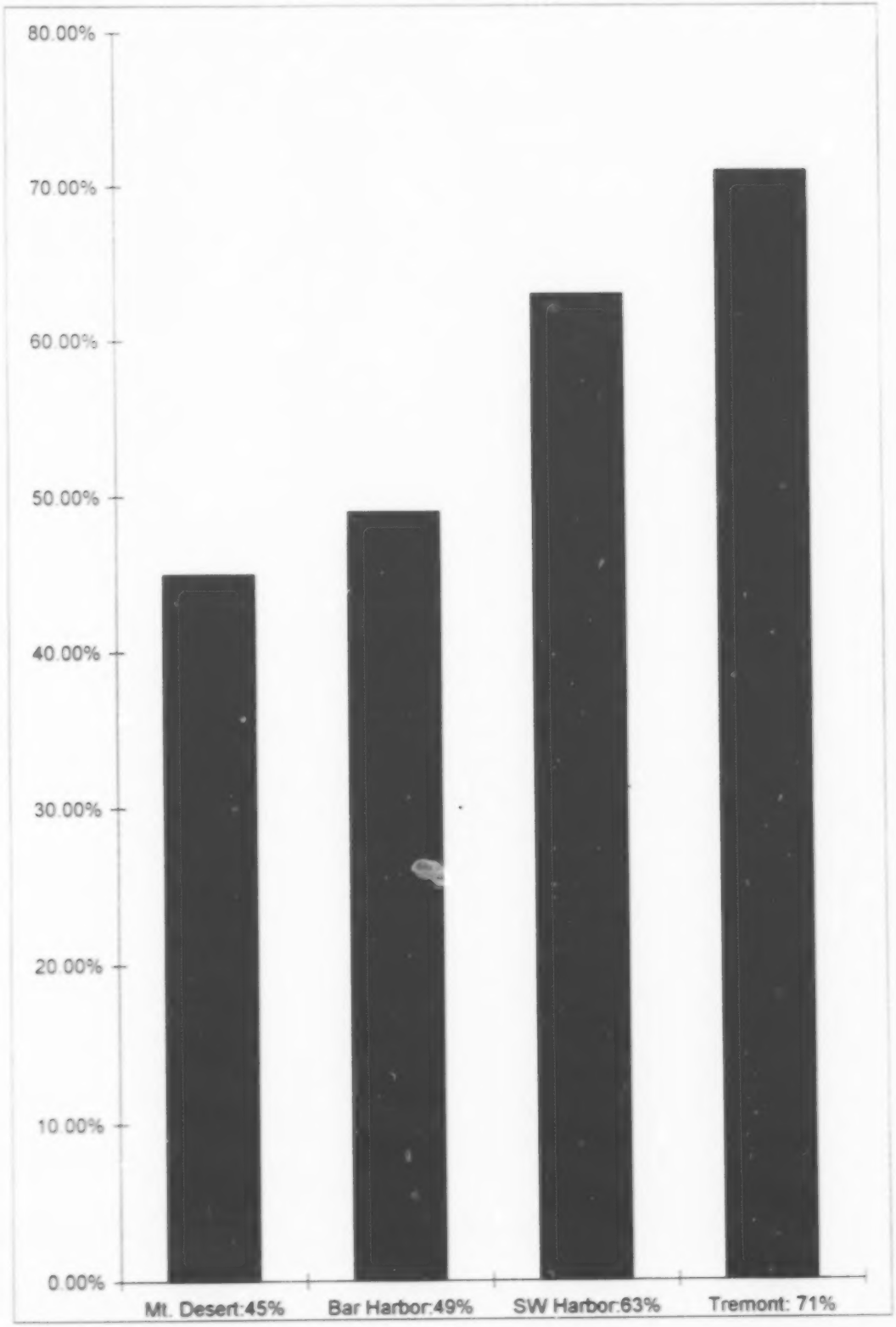
Percentage of School Board Members Who Are Native-Born

TABLE 4



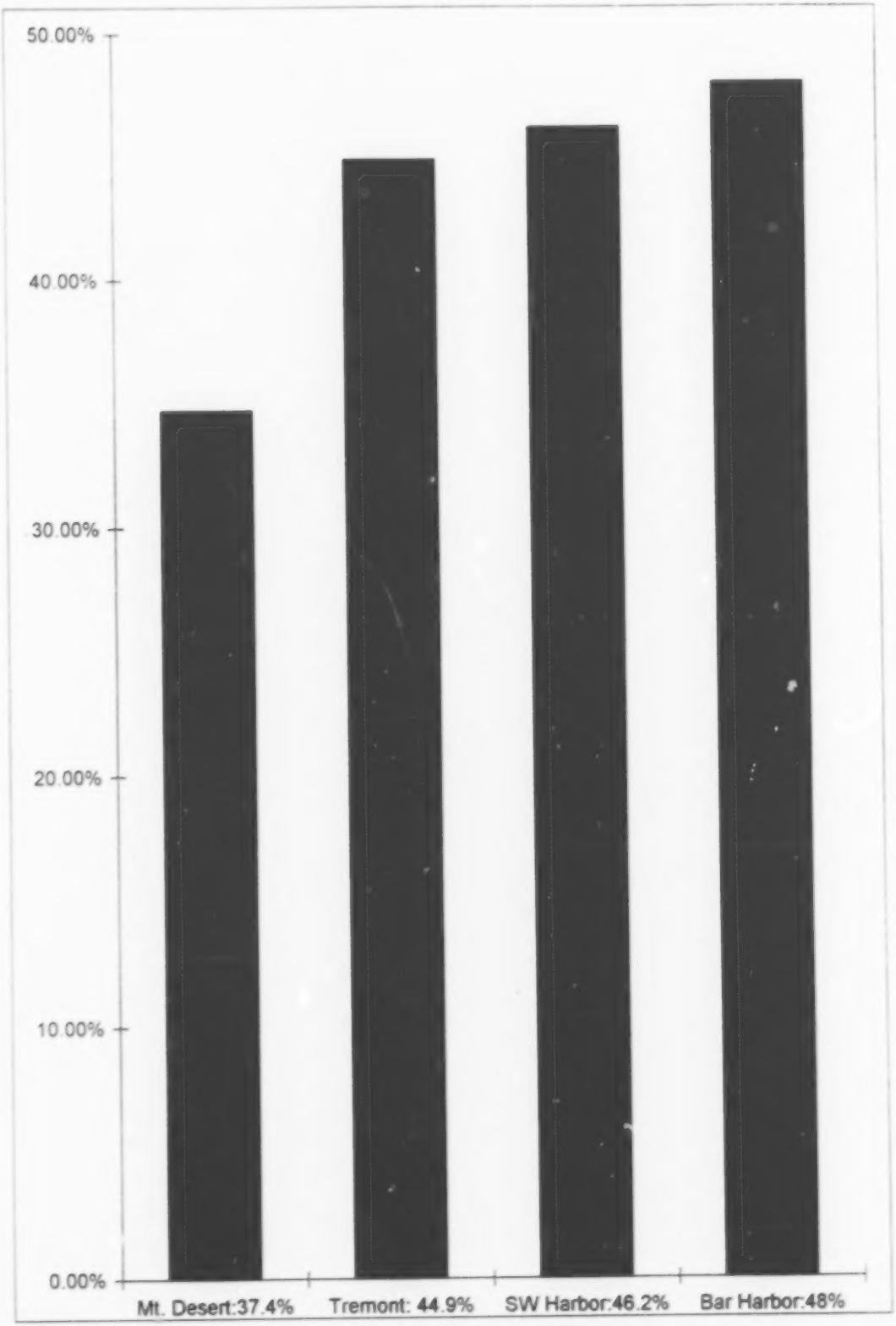
Percentage of School Board Members Who Are Native-Born

TABLE 5



Percentage of Town Budget Spent on Education

TABLE 6



Percentage of Households With Children

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